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THE POETS' HIGHWAY

EDITED BY

ELIZABETH D'OYLEY

EDITOR OF "ENGLISH ESSAYS," "TRAVELLERS' TALES," ETC.

BOOK III

(For pupils from 12 to 15 years old)

LONDON

EDWARD ARNOLD & CO.

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THE POETS' HIGHWAY

Edited by
ELIZABETH D'OYLEY

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INTO ELFLAND

A Fairy Madrigal *Unknown : 16th century*

COME let's begin to revel 't out,
And tread the hills and dales about,
That hills and dales and woods may sound
An echo to this warbling sound
Fa la la la.

Lads merry be with music sweet,
And Fairies trip it with your feet,
Pan's pipe is dull ; a better strain
Doth stretch itself to please your vein
Fa la la la.

Fairy Song *John Keats (1795-1821)*

SHED no tear ! O shed no tear !
The flower will bloom another year.
Weep no more ! O weep no more !
Young buds sleep in the roots' white core.
Dry your eyes ! O dry your eyes !
For I was taught in Paradise
To ease my breast of melodies—
Shed no tear !

Overhead ! look overhead !
'Mong the blossoms white and red—
Look up, look up ! I flutter now
On this fresh pomegranate bough.
See me ! 'tis this silvery bill
Ever cures the good man's ill.

Shed no tear ! O shed no tear !
 The flower will bloom another year.
 Adieu, adieu—I fly—adieu !
 I vanish in the heaven's blue—
Adieu, adieu !

Proud Maisie*Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832)*

PROUD Maisie is in the wood,
 Walking so early ;
 Sweet Robin sits on the bush
 Singing so rarely.

“Tell me, thou bonny bird,
 When shall I marry me ? ”

“When six braw gentlemen
 Kirkward shall carry ye.”

“Who makes the bridal bed,
 Birdie, say truly ? ”

“The grey-headed sexton
 That delves the grave duly.

“The glow-worm o'er grave and stone
 Shall light thee steady ;
 The owl from the steeple sing
 Welcome, proud lady.”

The Death of Puck*Eugene Lee-Hamilton (1845–1907)*

I

I FEAR that Puck is dead—it is so long
 Since men last saw him ;—dead with all the rest
 Of that sweet elfin crew that made their nest
 In hollow nuts, where hazels sing their song ;

Dead and for ever, like the antique throng
 The elves replaced ; the Dryad that you guess'd
 Behind the leaves ; the Naiad weed-bedress'd ;
 The leaf-car'd Faun that loved to lead you wrong.

Tell me, thou hopping Robin, hast thou met
 A little man, no bigger than thyself,
 Whom they call Puck, where woodland bells are wet?
 Tell me, thou Wood-Mouse, hast thou seen an elf
 Whom they call Puck, and is he seated yet,
 Capp'd with a snail-shell, on his mushroom shelf ?

II

The Robin gave three hops, and chirp'd, and said :
 " Yes, I knew Puck, and loved him ; though I
 trow
 He mimick'd oft my whistle, chuckling low ;
 Yes, I know cousin Puck ; but he is dead.
 We found him lying on his mushroom bed—
 The Wren and I—half-cover'd up with snow,
 As we were hopping where the berries grow,
 We think he died of cold. Ay, Puck is fled."

And then the Wood-Mouse said : " We made the
 Mole
 Dig him a little grave beneath the moss,
 And four big Dormice placed him in the hole,
 The Squirrel made with sticks a little cross ;
 Puck was a Christian elf, and had a soul ;
 And all we velvet jackets mourn his loss."

Fairy Lullaby *William Shakespeare* (1564–1616)

You spotted snakes with double tongue,
 Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen ;
 Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong,
 Come not near our Fairy Queen.

Philomel, with melody
 Sing in our sweet lullaby ;
 Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby :
 Never harm,
 Nor spell nor charm,
 Come our lovely lady nigh ;
 So good-night, with lullaby.

Weaving spiders, come not here ;
 Hence, you long-legged spinners, hence !
 Beetles black, approach not near :
 Worm nor snail do no offence.
 Philomel with melody,
 Sing in our sweet lullaby ;
 Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby :
 Never harm
 Nor spell nor charm,
 Come our lovely lady nigh ;
 So good-night, with lullaby.

The Fairy Palace *Michael Drayton (1563–1631)*

THIS palace standeth in the air,
 By necromancy placèd there,
 That it no tempest needs to fear,
 Which way soe'er it blow it.
 And somewhat southward towards the noon,
 Whence lies a way up to the moon,
 And thence the Fairy can as soon
 Pass to the earth below it.

The walls of spiders' legs are made
 Well mortisèd and finely laid ;
 It was a master of his trade
 It curiously that builded ;

The windows of the eyes of cats,
And for the roof, instead of slats,
Is covered with the skins of bats,
With moonshine that are gilded.

The Chariot of the Fairy Queen

Michael Drayton (1563–1631)

HER chariot ready straight is made,
Each thing therein is fitting laid,
That she by nothing might be stayed,
For nought must be her letting ;
Four nimble gnats the horses were,
Their harnesses of gossamere,
Fly Cranion the charioteer
Upon the coachbox getting.

Her chariot of a snail's fine shell,
Which for the colours did excel,
The fair Queen Mab becoming well,
So lively was the limning ;
The seat the soft wool of the bee,
The cover, gallantly to see,
The wing of a pied butterfly ;
I trow 'twas simple trimming.

The wheels composed of cricket's bones
And daintily made for the nonce,
For fear of rattling on the stones
With thistle-down they shod it ;
For all her maidens much did fear
If Oberon had chance to hear
That Mab his Queen should have been there,
He would not have abode it.

She mounts her chariot with a trice
Nor would she stay, for no advice,

Until her maids that were so nice
To wait on her were fitted ;
But ran herself away alone,
Which when they heard, there was not one
But hasted after to be gone,
As he had been diswitted.

Hop and Mop and Drop so clear,
Pip and Trip and Skip that were
To Mab, their sovereign, ever dear,
Her special maids of honour ;
Fib and Tib and Pink and Pin,
Tick and Quick and Jill and Jin,
Tit and Nit and Wap and Win,
The train that wait upon her.

Upon a grasshopper they got
And, what with amble, what with trot,
For hedge and ditch they sparéd not,
But after her they hie them ;
A cobweb over them they throw,
To shield the wind if it should blow,
Themselves they wisely could bestow
Lest any should espy them.

Robin Good-Fellow

Unknown

FROM Oberon, in Fairyland,
The King of ghosts and shadows there,
Mad Robin I, at his command,
Am sent to view the night-sports here.
What revel rout
Is kept about,
In every corner where I go,
I will o'ersee,
And merry be,
And make good sport with ho, ho, ho !

More swift than lightning can I fly
 About this airy welkin soon,
 And, in a minute's space, descry
 Each thing that's done below the moon.
 There's not a hag
 Or ghost shall wag
 Or cry, 'ware goblins ! where I go,
 But Robin I
 Their feats will spy
 And send them home with ho, ho, ho !

Whene'er such wanderers I meet,
 As from their night-sports they trudge home,
 With counterfeiting voice I greet
 And call them on, with me to roam
 Thro' woods, thro' lakes,
 Thro' bogs, thro' brakes ;
 Or else, unseen, with them I go
 All in the nick
 To play some trick
 And frolic it, with ho, ho, ho !

Sometimes I meet them like a man ;
 Sometimes an ox, sometimes a hound ;
 And to a horse I turn me can,
 To trip and troll about them round.
 But if to ride
 My back they stride,
 More swift than wind away I go ;
 O'er hedge and lands,
 Thro' pools and ponds
 I whirry, laughing ho, ho, ho !

When lads and lasses merry be
 With possets and with juncates fine ;
 Unseen of all the company,
 I eat their cakes, and sip their wine ;

And, to make sport,
I puff and snort ;
And out the candles I do blow :
The maids I kiss ;
They shriek—Who's this ?
I answer nought but ho, ho, ho !

By wells and rills, in meadows green,
We nightly dance our hey-day guise ;
And to our fairy king and queen
We chant our moonlight minstrelsies.
When larks 'gin sing,
Away we fling ;
And babes new-born steal as we go,
And elf in bed
We leave instead,
And wend us, laughing ho, ho, ho !

From hag-bred Merlin's time have I
Thus nightly revell'd to and fro :
And for my pranks men call me by
The name of Robin Good-Fellow.
Fiends, ghosts and sprites,
Who haunt the nights,
The hags and goblins do me know ;
And beldames old
My feats have told ;
So fare thee well, with ho, ho, ho !

La Belle Dame Sans Mercy

John Keats (1795–1821)

“ AH, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
Alone and palely loitering ?
The sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

“ Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
 So haggard and so woe-begone ?
 The squirrel's granary is full,
 And the harvest's done.

“ I see a lily on thy brow,
 With anguish moist and fever dew ;
 And on thy cheek a fading rose
 Fast withereth too.”

“ I met a Lady in the meads
 Full beautiful, a fairy's child ;
 Her hair was long, her foot was light,
 And her eyes were wild.

“ I set her on my prancing steed,
 And nothing else saw all day long ;
 For sideways would she lean and sing
 A fairy's song.

“ I made a garland for her head,
 And bracelets too, and fragrant zone ;
 She look'd at me as she did love,
 And made sweet moan.

“ She found me roots of relish sweet,
 And honey wild, and manna dew ;
 And sure in language strange she said,
 I love thee true.

“ She took me to her elfin grot,
 And there she gazed and sigh'd deep,
 And there I shut her wild sad eyes,
 So kissed to sleep.

“ And there we slumber'd on the moss,
 And there I dream'd, ah, woe betide,
 The latest dream I ever dream'd
 On the cold hillside.

“I saw pale kings, and princes too,
Pale warriors, death pale were they all,
Who cried, ‘La belle Dame sans mercy
Hath thee in thrall!’

“I saw their starved lips in the gloom
With horrid warning gapèd wide,
And I awoke and found me here,
On the cold hill-side.

“And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.”

Queen Mab

William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

SHE comes

In shape no bigger than an agate stone
On the forefinger of an alderman ;
Drawn with a team of little atomies
Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep :
Her wagon spokes made of long spinner's legs ;
The cover, of the wings of grasshoppers ;
The traces, of the smallest spider's web ;
The collars of the moonshine's watery beams ;
Her whip of cricket's bone, the lash, of film ;
Her wagoner, a small grey-coated gnat,
Not half so big as a round little wort,
Pricked from the lazy finger of a maid.
Her chariot is an empty hazel nut,
Made by the joiner squirrel, or old grub,
Time out of mind the fairies' coachmakers,
And in this state she gallops night by night,
Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of
love.

The Sleeping Beauty *Lord Tennyson* (1809–1892)

I—The Magic Sleep

YEAR after year unto her feet,
 She lying on her couch alone,
 Across the purple coverlet,
 The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,
 On either side her trancèd form
 Forth streaming from a braid of pearl :
 The slumbrous light is rich and warm,
 And moves not on the rounded curl.

The silk star-broider'd coverlid
 Unto her limbs itself doth mould,
 Languidly ever ; and, amid
 Her full black ringlets downward roll'd,
 Glows forth each softly shadow'd arm
 With bracelets of the diamond bright
 Her constant beauty doth inform
 Stillness with love, and day with light.

She sleeps : her breathings are not heard
 In palace chambers far apart.
 The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd,
 That lie upon her charmed heart.
 She sleeps : on either hand upswells
 The gold-fringed pillow lightly press'd :
 She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells
 A perfect form in perfect rest.

II—The Fairy Prince's Arrival

A touch, a kiss ! the charm was snapt,
 There rose a noise of striking clocks,
 And feet that ran and doors that clapt,
 And barking dogs and crowing cocks ;

A fuller light illumin'd all,
A breeze through all the garden swept,
A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,
The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,
The fire shot up, the martin flew,
The parrot scream'd, the peacock squall'd,
The maid and page renew'd their strife,
The palace bang'd and buzz'd and clackt,
And all the long pent stream of life
Dash'd downward in a cataract.

And last with these the king awoke,
And in his chair himself uprear'd,
And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and spoke,
"By holy rood, a royal beard!
How say you? we have slept, my lords.
My beard has grown into my lap."
The barons swore, with many words,
'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

"Pardy," return'd the king, "but still
My joints are something stiff or so.
My Lord, and shall we pass the bill
I mention'd half an hour ago?"
The chancellor sedate and vain
In courteous words return'd reply:
But dallied with his golden chain,
And, smiling, put the question by.

The Daemon Lover

Old Ballad

"O WHERE have you been, my long, long love,
This long seven years and more?"
"O I'm come to seek my former vows
Ye granted me before."

“ O hold your tongue of your former vows,
 For they will breed sad strife ;
 O hold your tongue of your former vows,
 For I am become a wife.”

He turn'd him right and round about,
 And the tear blinded his e'e ;
 “ I would never have trodden on Irish ground,
 If it had not been for thee.

“ I might have had a king's daughter,
 Far, far beyond the sea ;
 I might have had a king's daughter,
 Had it not been for love of thee.”

“ If ye might have had a king's daughter,
 Yourself you had to blame ;
 Ye might have taken the king's daughter,
 For ye knew that I was nane.”

“ O false are the vows of womankind,
 But fair is their false bodie ;
 I never would have trodden on Irish ground
 Had it not been for love of thee.”

“ If I was to leave my husband dear,
 And my two babes also,
 O what have you to take me to,
 If with you I should go ? ”

“ I have seven ships upon the sea,
 The eighth brought me to land ;
 With four and twenty bold mariners,
 And music on every hand.”

She has taken up her two little babes,
Kiss'd them both cheek and chin ;
“ O fare ye well, my own two babes,
For I'll never see you again.”

She set her foot upon the ship,
No mariners could she behold ;
But the *sails* were of the taffetie,
And the masts of the beaten gold.

She had not sail'd a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
When dismal grew his countenance,
And drumlie ¹ grew his c'e.

The masts that were like the beaten gold
Bent not on the heaving seas ;
And the sails that were of the taffetie
Fill'd not in the east land breeze.

They had not sail'd a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
Until she espied his cloven foot,
And she wept right bitterly.

“ O hold your tongue of your weeping,” says he,
“ Of your weeping now let me be ;
I will show you how the lilies grow
On the banks of Italy.”

“ O what hills are yon, yon pleasant hills,
That the sun shines sweetly on ? ”
“ O yon are the hills of heaven,” he said,
“ Where you will never won.” ²

¹ Dark.

² Win.

“ O what a mountain is yon,” she said,
 “ All so dreary with frost and snow ? ”
 “ O yon is the mountain of hell,” he cried,
 “ Where you and I will go.”

And aye when she turn'd her round about
 Aye taller he seem'd for to be ;
 Until that the tops of that gallant ship
 No taller were than he.

The clouds grew dark and the wind grew loud,
 And the levin ¹ filled her e'e ;
 And waesome wail'd the snow-white sprites
 Upon the gurlie ² sea.

He struck the topmast with his hand,
 The foremast with his knee ;
 And he brake that gallant ship in twain,
 And sank her in the sea.

The Gay Goshawk

Old Ballad

“ O WELL is me, my gay goshawk,
 That you can speak and flee ;
 For you can carry a love-letter
 To my true Love from me.”

“ O how can I carry a letter to her ?
 Or how should I her know ?
 I bear a tongue ne'er with her spake,
 And eyes that ne'er her saw.”

“ O well shall ye my true Love ken,
 So soon as ye her see :
 For of all the flowers of fair England
 The fairest flower is she.

¹ Lightning.

² Stormy.

“And when she goes into the house,
Sit ye upon the whin ;
And sit you there and sing our loves
As she goes out and in.”

Lord William has written a love-letter,
Put it under his pinion gray :
And he's awa' to the Southern land
As fast as wings can gae.

At first he sang a low, low note,
And then he sang a clear ;
And aye the burden of the song
Was “Your Love can no win here.”

“Feast on, feast on, my maidens all
—The wine flows you among—
While I go to my west window
And hear yon bonnie bird's song.”

O, first he sang a merry song,
And then he sang a grave :
And then he peck'd his feathers gray ;
To her the letter gave.

“Have there a letter from Lord William :
He says, he sent ye three ;
He can not wait your love longer,
But for your sake he'll dee.”

“I send him the rings from my white fingers,
The garlands of my hair ;
I send him the heart that's in my breast ;
What would my Love have mair ?

“ Go bid him bake his bridal bread,
 And brew his bridal ale ;
 And I shall meet him at Mary’s Kirk
 Long, long ere it grow stale.”

She hied her to her father dear
 As fast as go could she :
 “ A boon, a boon, my father dear,
 A boon I beg of thee.”

“ Ask not that haughty Scottish lord,
 For him ye’ll never see.”
 “ Then if I die in Southern land,
 In Scotland bury me.

“ At the first kirk of fair Scotland,
 Ye’ll let the bells be rung ;
 At the second kirk of fair Scotland,
 Ye’ll let the mass be sung ;

“ And when ye come to Saint Mary’s Kirk,
 Ye’ll tarry there till night.”
 And so her father pledged his word,
 And so his promise plight.

The lady’s gone to her chamber
 As fast as she could fare ;
 And she has drunk a sleepy draft
 That she had mixed with care.

And pale, pale, grew her rosy cheek,
 And pale and cold was she :—
 She seem’d to be as surely dead
 As any corpse could be.

Then spake her cruel stepminnie,
“Take ye the burning lead,
And drop a drop on her bosom,
To try if she be dead.”

They dropp'd the hot lead on her cheek,
They dropp'd it on her chin,
They dropp'd it on her bosom white ;
But she spake none agin.

Then up arose her seven brethren,
And hew'd for her a bier ;
They hew'd it from the solid oak ;
Laid it o'er with silver clear.

The first Scots kirk that they came to
They let the bells be rung ;
The next Scots kirk that they came to
They let the mass be sung.

But when they came to Saint Mary's Kirk
There stood spearmen in a row ;
And up and started Lord William,
The chieftain among them a'.

He rent the sheet upon her face
A little above her chin :
With rosy cheek, and ruby lip,
She look'd and laugh'd to him.

“A morsel of your bread, my lord !
And one glass of your wine !
For I have fasted these three long days
All for your sake and mine !”

WITH BIRD AND BEAST

To the Lark

Robert Herrick (1591–1674)

GOOD speed, for I this day
Betimes my matins say,
Because I do
Begin to woo.
Sweet singing lark,
Be thou the clerk,
And know thy when
To say Amen.
And if I prove
Blest in my love,
Then thou shalt be
High Priest to me,
At my return
To incense burn,
And so to solemnize
Love's and my sacrifice.

The Starlings

Charles Kingsley (1819–1875)

EARLY in the spring time, on raw and windy mornings,
Beneath the freezing house-eaves I heard the starlings sing—
“ Ah dreary March month, is this then a time for
building wearily ?
Sad, sad, to think that the year is but begun ’

Late in the autumn, on still and cloudless evenings,
Among the golden reed-beds I heard the starlings
sing—

“ Ah that sweet March month, when we and our
mates were courting merrily ;
Sad, sad, to think that the year is all but done.”

The Birds' Mating *William Blake (1757–1827)*

He. WHERE thou dwellest, in what Grove,
Tell me, fair one, tell me, love ;
Where thou thy charming nest dost build,
O thou pride of every field !

She. Yonder stands a lonely tree,
There I live and mourn for thee ;
Morning drinks my silent tear,
And evening winds my sorrow bear.

He. O thou summer's harmony,
I have lived and mourned for thee ;
Each day I mourn along the wood,
And night hath heard my sorrow's loud.

She. Dost thou truly long for me ?
And am I thus sweet to thee ?
Sorrow now is at an end,
O my lover and my friend !

He. Come, on wings of joy we'll fly
To where my bower hangs on high ;
Come, and make thy calm retreat,
Among green leaves and blossoms sweet.

The Parrots*Wilfrid Wilson Gibson*

SOMEWHERE, somewhen I've seen,
But where or when I'll never know
Parrots of shrilly green
With crests of shriller scarlet flying
Out of black cedars as the sun was dying
Against cold peaks of snow.

From what forgotten life
Of other worlds I cannot tell
Flashes that screeching strife ;
Yet the shrill colour and the shrill crying
Sing through my blood and set my heart replying
And jangling like a bell.

The Nun's Lament for Philip Sparrow*John Skelton (1460-1529)*

WHEN I remember'd again
How my Philip was slain,
I wept and I wailed,
The tears down hailed ;
But nothing it avail'd
To call Philip again
Whom Gib our cat hath slain.

It had a velvet cap,
And would sit on my lap,
And seek after small worms,
And sometimes white breadcrumbs ;
And many times and oft
Within my breast soft
It would lie and rest.

Sometimes he would gasp
When he saw a wasp ;

A fly or a gnat,
 He would fly at that ;
 And prettily he would pant
 When he saw an ant ;
 Lord, how he would pry
 After the butterfly.
 Lord, how he would hop
 After the grasshop.
 And when I said, Phip, Phip,
 Then he would leap and skip,
 And take me by the lip.
De profundis clamavi ¹
 When I saw my sparrow die.

The Dead Sparrow *W. Cartwright (1611–1643)*

TELL me not of joy : there's none
 Now my little Sparrow's gone ;
 He, just as you,
 Would try and woo,
 He would chirp and flatter me ;
 He would hang the wing awhile,
 Till at length he saw me smile,
 Lord, how sullen he would be !

He would catch a crumb, and then
 Sporting, let it go again ;
 He from my lip
 Would moisture sip ;
 He would from my trencher feed ;
 Then would hop, and then would run,
 And cry *Philip* when he'd done,
 O whose heart can choose but bleed ?

¹ Out of the deep I have called.

O how eager would he fight,
And ne'er hurt, though he did bite.
 No morn did pass,
 But on my glass
He would sit, and mark and do
What I did—now ruffle all
His feathers o'er, now let them fall ;
And straightway sleek them too.

Whence will Cupid get his darts
Feathered now to pierce our hearts ?
 A wound he may
 Not, Love, convey,
Now this faithful bird is gone ;
O let mournful turtles join,
With loving redbreasts, and combine
To sing dirges o'er his stone.

Philomel*Richard Barnfield (1574–1627)*

As it fell upon a day
In the merry month of May,
Sitting in a pleasant shade
Which a grove of myrtles made,
Beasts did leap and birds did sing,
Trees did grow and plants did spring ;
Everything did banish moan
Save the Nightingale alone :
She, poor bird, as all forlorn
Leaned her breast up-till a thorn,
And there sung the doleful'st ditty,
That to hear it was great pity.

Fie, fie, fie! now would she cry ;
Tereu, tereu! by and by ;
That to hear her so complain
Scarce I could from tears refrain ;

For her griefs so lively shown
Made me think upon mine own.
Ah ! thought I, thou mourn'st in vain,
None takes pity on thy pain :
Senseless trees they cannot hear thee,
Ruthless beasts they will not cheer thee ;
King Pandion he is dead ;
All thy friends are lapped in lead ;
All thy fellow birds do sing
Careless of thy sorrowing :
Even so, poor bird, like thee,
None alive will pity me.

Ode to a Nightingale *John Keats (1795–1821)*

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk :
'Tis not through envy of thine happy lot,
But being too happy in thy happiness,—
That thou, light-wingèd Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O for a draught of vintage ! that hath been
Cooled a long age in the deep-delvèd earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth.
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stainèd mouth ;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen
And with thee fade away into the forest dim :

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget,

What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret

Here, where men sit and hear each other
groan ;

Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last grey hairs,

Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and
dies ;

Where but to think is to be full of sorrow

And leaden-eyed despairs,

Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,

Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,

Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,

But on the viewless wings of Poesy,

Though the dull brain perplexes and retards :

Already with thee ! tender is the night,

And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,

Clustered around by all her starry Fays ;

But here there is no light,

Save what from heaven is with the breezes
blown

Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy
ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,

Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,

But, in embalmèd darkness, guess each sweet

Wherewith the seasonable month endows

The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild ;

White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine ;

Fast fading violets covered up in leaves ;

And mid-May's eldest child,

The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,

The murmurous haunt of flies on summer

Darkling I listen ; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Called him soft names in many a musèd rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath ;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy !
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird !
No hungry generations tread thee down ;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown :
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for
home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn ;
The same that oft-times hath
Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in fairy lands forlorn.

Forlorn ! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self !
Adieu ! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu ! adieu ! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side ; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades :
Was it a vision, or a waking dream ?
Fled is that music ;—Do I wake or sleep ?

The Butterfly*Edmund Spenser (1552-1599)*

To the gay gardens his unstaide desire
Him wholly carried, to refresh his sprights :
There lavish Nature, in her best attire,
Pours forth sweet odours and alluring sights ;
And Art, with her contending, doth aspire
T'excel the natural with made delights ;
And all, that fair or pleasant may be found,
In riotous excess doth there abound.

There he arriving, round about doth fly,
From bed to bed, from one to other border,
And takes survey, with curious busy eye,
Of every flower and herb there set in order ;
Now this, now that, he tasteth tenderly,
Yet none of them he rudely doth disorder,
Nor with his feet their silken leaves deface,
But pastures on the pleasures of each place.

And evermore, with most variety
And change of sweetness (for all change is sweet),
He casts his glutton sense to satisfy,
Now sucking of the sap of herb most meet,
Or of the dew which yet on them does lie,
Now in the same bathing his tender feet ;
And then he percheth on some branch thereby,
To weather him, and his moist wings to dry.

And then again he turneth to his play,
To spoil the pleasures of that Paradise ;
The wholesome Sage, and Lavender still grey,
Rank-smelling Rue, and Cummin good for eyes,
The Roses reigning in the pride of May,
Sharp Hyssop, good for green wounds' remedies,
Fair Marigolds, and bees-alluring Thyme,
Sweet Marjoram, and Daisies decking prime

And whatso else of virtue good or ill
 Grew in this Garden, fetched from far away,
 Of every one he takes, and tastes at will,
 And on their pleasures greedily doth prey.
 Then, when he hath both played and fed his fill,
 In the warm Sun he doth himself embay
 And there him rests in riotous suffisaunce
 Of all his gladfulness, and kingly joyaunce.

What more felicity can fall to creature
 Than to enjoy delight with liberty,
 And to be Lord of all the works of Nature,
 To reign in th' air from th' earth to highest sky,
 To feed on flowers and weeds of glorious feature,
 To take whatever thing doth please the eye ?
 Who rests not pleasèd with such happiness,
 Well worthy he to taste of wretchedness.

Oh, Little Cat

Helen Vaughan Williams

OH, little cat with yellow eyes,
 Enthroned upon my garden gate,
 Remote, impassive and sedate,
 And so unutterably wise.

You seem to watch a world that lies
 Behind us—where the shadows wait,
 Oh, little cat with yellow eyes,
 Enthroned upon my garden gate !

Where visions of the past arise,
 Of honoured dust and royal state,
 And Pharaohs bowed to call you great.

Or are you merely spotting flies,
 Oh, little cat with yellow eyes ?

The Monk and his Cat Pangur

Translation by Kuno Meyer from the Gaelic

I AND my white Pangur
Have each his special art :
His mind is set on hunting mice,
Mine is upon my special craft.

I love to rest—better than any fame !—
With close study at my little book ;
White Pangur does not envy me :
He loves his childish play.

When in our house we two are all alone—
A tale without tedium !
We have—sport never ending !
Something to exercise our wit.

At times by feats of derring-do
A mouse sticks in his net,
While into my net there drops
A difficult problem of hard meaning.

He points his full shining eye
Against the fence of the wall :
I point my clear though feeble eye
Against the keenness of science.

He rejoices with quick leaps
When in his sharp claw sticks a mouse :
I too rejoice when I have grasped
A problem difficult and dearly loved.

Though we are thus at all times,
Neither hinders the other,
Each of us pleased with his own art
Amuses himself alone.

He is a master of the work
Which every day he does :
While I am at my own work
To bring difficulty to clearness.

On a Favourite Cat Drowned in a Tub of Goldfishes
Thomas Gray (1716–1771)

'Twas on a lofty vase's side,
Where China's gayest art had dyed
The azure flowers that blow,
Demurest of the tabby kind,
The pensive Selima, reclined,
Gazed on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declared :
The fair round face, the snowy beard,
The velvet of her paws,
Her coat that with the tortoise vies,
Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,
She saw, and purr'd applause.

Still had she gazed, but midst the tide
Two angel forms were seen to glide,
The Genii of the stream :
Their scaly armour's Tyrian hue,
Through richest purple to the view
Betray'd a golden gleam.

The hapless Nymph with wonder saw
A whisker first, and then a claw,
With many an ardent wish,
She stretch'd in vain to reach the prize ;
What female heart can gold despise ?
What cat's averse to fish ?

Presumptuous maid ! with looks intent
Again she stretch'd, again she bent,
Nor knew the gulf between—
Malignant Fate sat by and smiled—
The slippery verge her feet beguiled ;
She tumbled headlong in !

Eight times emerging from the flood
She mew'd to every watery god
Some speedy aid to send :
No dolphin came, no Nereid stirr'd,
Nor cruel Tom nor Susan heard—
A favourite has no friend !

From hence, ye Beauties, undeceived,
Know one false step is ne'er retrieved,
And be with caution bold :
Not all that tempts your wandering eyes
And heedless hearts, is lawful prize,
Nor all that glitters, gold !

A Child's Pet

W. H. Davies

WHEN I sailed out of Baltimore
With twice a thousand head of sheep,
They would not eat, they would not drink,
But bleated o'er the deep.

Inside the pens we crawled each day,
To sort the living from the dead ;
And when we reached the Mersey's mouth
Had lost five hundred head.

Yet every night and day one sheep,
That had no fear of man or sea,
Stuck through the bars its pleading face,
And it was stroked by me.

And to the sheep-men standing near,
“You see,” I said, “this one tame sheep :
It seems a child has lost her pet,
And cried herself to sleep.”

So every time we passed it by,
Sailing to England's slaughter-house,
Eight ragged sheep-men—tramps and thieves—
Would stroke that sheep's black nose.

The Donkey

G. K. Chesterton

WHEN fishes flew and forests walked
And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moment when the moon was blood
Then surely I was born ;

With monstrous head and sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will ;
Starve, scourge, deride me : I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

Fools ! For I also had my hour ;
One far fierce hour and sweet :
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet.

The Kerry Cow*W. M. Letts*

It's in Connacht or in Munster that yourself might
travel wide,
And be asking all the herds you'd meet along the
countryside,
But you'd never meet a one could show the likes
of her till now,
Where she's grazing in a Leinster field—my little
Kerry cow.

If herself went to the cattle fairs she'd put all cows
to shame,
For the finest poets of the land would meet to sing
her fame ;
And the young girls would be asking leave to stroke
her satin coat ;
They'd be praising and caressing her, and calling
her a dote.

If the King of Spain gets news of her he'll fill his
purse with gold,
And set sail to ask the English King where she is
to be sold.
But the King of Spain may come to me, a crown
upon his brow,
It is he may keep his golden purse—and I my
Kerry cow.

The priest maybe will tell her fame to the Holy
Pope of Rome,
And the Cardinals' College send for her to leave her
Irish home ;
But it's heart-broke she would be itself to cross the
Irish sea,
'Twould be best they'd send a blessing to my Kerry
cow and me.

When the Ulster men hear tell of her, they'll come
with swords an' pikes,
For it's civil war there'll be no less if they should
see her likes,
And you'll read it in the paper of the bloody fight
there's been,
An' the Orangemen they're burying in fields of
Leinster green.

There are red cows that's contrary, and there's
white cows quare and wild,
But my Kerry cow is biddable, an' gentle as a
child.
You may rare up kings and heroes on the lovely
milk she yields,
For she's fit to foster generals to fight our battle-fields.

In the histories they'll be making they've a right to
put her name
With the horse of Troy and Oisin's hounds and
other beasts of fame.
And the painters will be painting her beneath the
hawthorn bough
Where she's grazing on the good green grass—my
little Kerry cow.

In the Wilderness

Robert Graves

CHRIST of His gentleness
Thirsting and hungering
Walked in the wilderness ;
Soft words of grace He spoke
Unto lost desert-folk
That listened wondering.
He heard the bitterns call
From ruined palace-wall,

Answered them brotherly.
He held communion
With the she-pelican
Of lonely piety.
Basilisk, cockatrice,
Flocked to His homilies,
With mail of dread device,
With monstrous barbèd stings,
With eager dragon-eyes ;
Great rats on leather wings
And poor blind broken things,
Foul in their miseries.
And ever with Him went,
Of all His wanderings
Comrade, with ragged coat,
Gaunt ribs—poor innocent—
Bleeding foot, burning throat,
The guileless old scapegoat ;
For forty nights and days
Followed in Jesus' ways,
Sure guard behind Him kept,
Tears like a lover wept.

Noah's Ark*Michael Drayton (1563–1631)*

AND now the beasts are walking from the wood,
As well of ravine, as that chew the cud.
The king of beasts his fury doth suppress,
And to the ark leads down the lioness.

The bull for his belovèd mate doth low,
And to the ark brings on the fair-eyed cow ;
The stately courser for his mare doth neigh,
And towards the new ark guideth her the way.

The wreathed-horned ram his safety doth pursue.
And to the ark ushers his gentle ewe ;

The bristly boar, who with his snout up-ploughed
The spacious plains, and with his grunting loud

Raised rattling echoes all the woods about,
Leaves his dark den, and having scented out
Noah's new-built ark, in with his sow doth come,
And styed themselves up in a little room.

The hart with his dear hind, the buck, and doe,
Leaving their wildness, bring the tripping roe
Along with them : and from the mountain steep
The clambering goat and coney, used to keep

Amongst the cliffs, together get, and they
To this great ark find out the ready way ;
Th' unwieldy elk, whose skin is of much proof,
Throngs with the rest to attain this wooden roof ;

The unicorn leaves off his pride, and close
There sets him down by the rhinoceros ;
The elephant there cometh to embark,
And as he softly getteth up the ark,

Feeling by his great weight his body sunk,
Holds by his huge tooth and his nervy trunk ;
The crook-backed camel climbing to the deck
Draws up himself with his long sinewy neck ;

The spotted panther, whose delicious scent
Oft causeth beasts his harbour to frequent,
But, having got them once into his power,
Sucketh their blood and doth their flesh devour,

His cruelty hath quickly cast aside,
And waxing courteous, doth become their guide,
And brings into the universal shop
The ounce, the tiger, and the antelope ;

By the grim wolf the poor sheep safely lay
And was his care, which lately was his prey ;
The ass upon the lion leaned his head,
And to the cat the mouse for succour fled ;

The silly hare doth cast aside her fear,
And forms herself fast by the ugly bear,
At whom the watchful dog did never bark
When he espied him clambering up the ark ;

The fox, got in, his subtleties hath left,
And, as ashamed of his former theft,
Sits sadly there, as though he did repent,
And in the ark became an innocent ;

The fine-furred ermine, marten, and the cat
That gives out civet, there together sat
By the shrewd monkey, babian, and the ape,
With the hyaena (much their like in shape),

Which by their kind are ever doing ill,
Yet in the ark sit civilly and still ;
The skipping squirrel of the forest free,
That leaped so nimbly betwixt tree and tree,

Itself into the ark then nimbly cast,
As 'twere a ship-boy come to climb the mast.
The little dormouse leaves her leaden sleep,
And with the mole up to the ark doth creep ;

With many other which were common then
(Their kind decayed), but now unknown to men ;
For there was none that Adam e'er did name
But to the ark from every quarter came ;

By two and two the male and female beast,
From swift'st to slow'st, from greatest to the least ;
And as within the strong pale of a park,
So were they all together in the ark.

INTO THE OPEN

Pleasure it is

William Cornish (fl. 1510)

PLEASURE it is
To hear, iwis,¹
The birdes sing.
The deer in the dale,
The sheep in the vale,
The corn springing ;
God's purveyance
For sustenance
It is for man.
Then we always
To Him give praise,
And thank him than,²
And thank him than.

The Rainbow

William Wordsworth (1770–1850)

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky :
So was it when my life began,
So is it now I am a man,
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die !
The Child is father of the Man :
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

¹ Truly.

² Then.

The Ample Heaven *Henry Vaughan* (1622–1695)

THE unthrifty sun shot vital gold,
 A thousand pieces ;
 And heaven its azure did unfold
 Chequered with snowy fleeces ;
 The air was all in spice,
 And every bush
 A garland wore ; thus fed my eyes,
 But all the earth lay hush.

Only a little fountain lent
 Some use for ears,
 And on the dumb shades language spent—
 The music of her tears.

A Little Garden Close *W. Morris* (1834–1896)

I KNOW a little garden close
 Set thick with lily and red rose,
 Where I would wander if I might
 From dewy dawn to dewy night,
 And have one with me wandering.

And though within it no birds sing,
 And though no pillared house is there,
 And though the apple boughs are bare
 Of fruit and blossom, would to God,
 Her feet upon the green grass trod,
 And I beheld them as before.

There comes a murmur from the shore,
 And in the place two fair streams are,
 Drawn from the purple hills afar,
 Drawn down unto the restless sea ;
 Dark hills whose flowers ne'er fed the bee,

The shore no ship has ever seen,
Still beaten by the billows green,
Whose murmur comes unceasingly
Unto the place for which I cry.

Madrigal*Unknown*

LADY, when I behold the roses sprouting,
Which clad in damask mantles deck the arbours,
And then behold your lips, where sweet love harbours,
Mine eyes present me with a double doubting ;
For, viewing both alike, hardly my mind supposes,
Whether the roses be your lips,—or your lips the
roses.

Gather ye Rosebuds *Robert Herrick (1591–1674)*

GATHER ye rosebuds while ye may ;
Old time is still a-flying ;
And this same flower that smiles to-day,
To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
The higher he's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be done,
The nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer ;
But being spent, the worse, and worst,
Times, will succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
And while ye may, go marry ;
For having lost but once your prime,
You may for ever tarry.

· To Blossoms

Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

FAIR pledges of a fruitful tree,
 Why do ye fall so fast ?
 Your date is not so past,
 But you may stay yet here awhile,
 To blush and gently smile,
 And go at last.

What, were ye born to be
 An hour or half's delight ;
 And so to bid good-night ?
 'Twas pity Nature brought you forth,
 Merely to show your worth,
 And lose you quite.

But you are lovely leaves, where we
 May read how soon things have
 Their end, tho' ne'er so brave :
 And after they have shown their pride,
 Like you awhile—they glide
 Into the grave.

Sweet is the Rose *Edmund Spenser (1552-1599)*

SWEET is the Rose, but grows upon a brier ;
 Sweet is the Juniper, but sharp his bough ;
 Sweet is the Eglantine, but pricketh near ;
 Sweet is the Fирbloom, but his branches rough ;
 Sweet is the Cypress, but his rind is tough ;
 Sweet is the Nut, but bitter is his pill ;
 Sweet is the Broomflower, but yet sour enough ;
 And sweet is Moly, but his root is ill.
 So every sweet with sour is temp'red still,

That maketh it be coveted the more :
For easy things, that may be got at will,
Most sorts of men do set but little store.

Why then should I account of little pain,
That endless pleasure shall unto me gain !

The Songs of Spring *John Lyly* (1554?–1606)

WHAT bird so sings, yet so does wail ?
O, 'tis the ravished nightingale !
“Jug, jug, jug, jug, tereu,” she cries,
And still her woes at midnight rise
Brave prick-song ! who is't now we hear ?
None but the lark so shrill and clear ;
Now at heaven's gates she claps her wings,
The morn not waking till she sings.
Hark, hark, with what a pretty throat
Poor robin-redbreast tunes his note ;
Hark, how the jolly cuckoos sing
Cuckoo—to welcome in the Spring !
Cuckoo—to welcome in the Spring !

Song on May Morning *J. Milton* (1608–1674)

Now the bright morning Star, Day's harbinger,
Comes dancing from the East, and leads with her
The flowery May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose.

Hail, bounteous May, that dost inspire
Mirth and youth and young desire,
Woods and groves, are of thy dressing,
Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing.
Thus we salute thee with our early Song,
And welcome thee, and wish thee long.

Home Thoughts from Abroad

Robert Browning (1812–1889)

OH, to be in England
 Now that April's there,
 And whoever wakes in England
 Sees, some morning, unaware,
 That the lowest boughs and the bushwood sheaf
 Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
 While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
 In England—now !

And after April, when May follows,
 And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows !
 Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
 Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
 Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
 That's the wise thrush ; he sings each song twice
 over,
 Lest you should think he never could recapture
 The first fine careless rapture !
 And though the fields look rough with hoary dew
 All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
 The buttercups, the little children's dower
 —Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower.

The Lark now leaves his Watery Nest

Sir William Davenant (1606–1668)

THE lark now leaves his watery nest,
 And climbing shakes his dewy wings ;
 He takes your window for the East,
 And to implore your light, he sings :
 Awake, awake ! the morn will never rise
 Till she can dress her beauty at your eyes.

The merchant bows unto the seaman's star,
The ploughman from the sun his season takes ;
But still the lover wonders what they are
Who look for day before his mistress wakes :
Awake, awake ! break through your veils of
lawn ;
Then draw your curtains, and begin the dawn !

Good-morrow*Thomas Heywood (d. 1650 ?)*

PACK, clouds, away ! and welcome, day !
With night we banish sorrow :
Sweet air, blow soft ! mount, lark, aloft !
To give my Love good-morrow ;
Wings from the wind, to please her mind,
Notes from the lark I'll borrow.
Bird, prune thy wing ! nightingale, sing !
To give my Love good-morrow.
To give my Love good-morrow,
Notes from them all I'll borrow.

Wake from thy nest, robin redbreast !
Sing, birds, in every furrow !
And from each bill let music shrill
Give my fair Love good-morrow.
Blackbird and thrush, in every bush—
Stare,¹ linnet, and cock-sparrow,
You pretty elves—amongst yourselves
Sing my fair Love good-morrow !
To give my Love good-morrow,
Sing, birds, in every furrow !

¹ Starling.

Pan

John Fletcher (1579–1625)

SING his praises that doth keep
 Our flocks from harm,
 Pan, the father of our sheep ;
 And arm in arm
 Tread we softly in a round,
 Whilst the hollow neighbouring ground
 Fills the music with her sound.

Pan, O great god Pan, to thee
 Thus do we sing !
 Thou who keep'st us chaste and free
 As the young spring :
 Ever be thy honour spoke,
 From that place the morn is broke,
 To that place day doth unyoke !

To the Grasshopper *Richd. Lovelace* (1618–1658)

O THOU that swing'st upon the waving hair
 Of some well-fillèd oaten beard,
 Drunk every night with a delicious tear,
 Dropt thee from heaven, where thou wert reared !

The joys of earth and air are thine entire,
 That with thy feet and wings dost hop and fly ;
 And when thy poppy works, thou dost retire
 To thy carved acorn-bed to lie.

Up with the day, the Sun thou welcom'st then,
 Sport'st in the gilt plaits of his beams,
 And all these merry days mak'st merry men,
 Thyself, and melancholy streams.

The Coming of Spring *John Clare* (1793–1864)

THE hazel-blooms, in threads of crimson hue,
Peep through the swelling buds, foretelling Spring,
Ere yet a white-thorn leaf appears in view,
Or March finds throstles pleased enough to sing.
To the old touchwood-tree woodpeckers cling
A moment, and their harsh-toned notes renew ;
In happier mood, the stockdove claps his wing ;
The squirrel sputters up the powdered oak,
With tail cocked o'er his head, and ears erect,
Startled to hear the woodman's understroke ;
And with the courage which his fears collect,
He hisses fierce, half malice and half glee,
Leaping from branch to branch about the tree,
In winter's foliage, moss and lichens decked.

To one who has been long in city pent—

John Keats (1795–1821)

To one who has been long in city pent,
'Tis very sweet to look into the fair
And open face of heaven—to breathe a prayer
Full in the smile of the blue firmament.
Who is more happy, when, with heart's content,
Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair
Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair
And gentle tale of love and languishment ?
Returning home at evening, with an ear
Catching the notes of Philomel—an eye
Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,
He mourns that day so soon has glided by :
E'en like the passage of an angel's tear
That falls through the clear ether silently.

The Passionate Shepherd to his Love

Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593)

COME, live with me and be my Love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
Woods or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks,
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks
By shallow rivers, by whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses,
And a thousand fragrant posies ;
A cap of flowers and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle ;

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull ;
Fair-linèd slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold ;

A belt of straw and ivy-buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs :
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come, live with me and be my Love.

The shepherd-swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning :
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my Love.

The Lake Isle of Innisfree*W. B. Yeats*

I WILL arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles
made,
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the
honey bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes
dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the
cricket sings ;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple
glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the
shore ;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements
gray,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

A Thing of Beauty*John Keats (1795–1821)*

A THING of beauty is a joy for ever :
Its loveliness increases ; it will never
Pass into nothingness ; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways

Made for our searching : yes, in spite of all,
 Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
 From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
 Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
 For simple sheep ; and such are daffodils
 With the green world they live in ; and clear rills
 That for themselves a cooling covert make
 'Gainst the hot season ; the mid-forest brake,
 Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms :
 And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
 We have imagined for the mighty dead ;
 All lovely tales that we have heard or read :
 An endless fountain of immortal drink,
 Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

A Dream of Spring *P. B. Shelley (1792–1822)*

I DREAMED that as I wandered by the way
 Bare winter suddenly was changed to spring,
 And gentle odours led my steps astray,
 Mixed with the sound of waters murmuring
 Along a shelving bank of turf, which lay
 Under a copse, and hardly dared to fling
 Its green arms round the bosom of the stream,
 But kissed it and then fled, as thou mightest in
 dream.

There grew pied wind-flowers and violets,
 Daisies, those pearly Arcturi of the earth,
 The constellated flower that never sets ;
 Faint oxlips ; tender bluebells, at whose birth
 The sod scarce heaved ; and that tall flower that
 wets—

Like a child, half in tenderness and mirth—
 Its mother's face with heaven-collected tears,
 When the low wind, its playmate's voice. it hears.

And in the warm hedge grew lush eglantine,
Green cow-bind and the moonlight-coloured May,
And cherry-blossoms, and white cups, whose wine
Was the bright dew yet drained not by the day ;
And wild roses, and ivy serpentine,
With its dark buds and leaves, wandering astray ;
And flowers azure, black, and streaked with gold,
Fairer than any wakened eyes behold.

And nearer to the river's trembling edge
There grew broad flag-flowers, purple pranked
with white,
And starry river-buds among the sedge,
And floating water-lilies, broad and bright,
Which lit the oak that overhung the hedge
With moonlight beams of their own watery light ;
And bulrushes, and reeds of such deep green
As soothed the dazzled eye with sober sheen.

Methought that of these visionary flowers
I made a nosegay, bound in such a way
That the same hues, which in their natural bowers
Were mingled or opposed, the like array
Kept these imprisoned children of the hours
Within my hand—and then, elate and gay,
I hastened to the spot whence I had come
That I might there present it—oh, to whom ?

Ode to Autumn

John Keats (1795–1821)

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun ;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves
run ;

To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,
 And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core ;
 To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
 With a sweet kernel ; to set budding more,
 And still more, later flowers for the bees,
 Until they think warm days will never cease,
 For Summer has o'erbrimmed their clammy
 cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store ?
 Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
 Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
 Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind ;
 Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
 Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy
 hook
 Spares the next swath and all its twined
 flowers ;
 And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
 Steady thy laden head across a brook ;
 Or by a cider press, with patient look,
 Thou watchest the last oozy hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring ? Aye, where are
 they ?
 Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
 While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
 And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue ;
 Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
 Among the river shallows, borne aloft
 Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies ;
 And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly
 bourn ;
 Hedge-cricket sing ; and now with treble soft
 The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft ;
 And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

John Peel *John Woodcock Graves (1795–1886)*

D'YE ken John Peel with his coat so gay ?
D'ye ken John Peel at the break of the day ?
D'ye ken John Peel when he's far, far away,
With his hounds and his horn in the morning ?
For the sound of his horn brought me from my bed,
And the cry of his hounds which he oft-times led,
For Peel's view-hollo would awaken the dead,
Or the fox from his lair in the morning.

Yes, I ken John Peel and Ruby too,
Ranter and Ringwood, Bellman and True,
From a find to a check, from a check to a view,
From a view to a death in the morning.
For the sound of his horn brought me from my bed,
And the cry of his hounds which he oft-times led,
For Peel's view-hollo would awaken the dead,
Or the fox from his lair in the morning.

Then here's to John Peel from my heart and soul,
Let's drink to his health, let's finish the bowl,
We'll follow John Peel through fair and through foul,
If we want a good hunt in the morning.
For the sound of his horn brought me from my bed,
And the cry of his hounds which he oft-times led,
For Peel's view-hollo would awaken the dead
Or the fox from his lair in the morning.

D'ye ken John Peel with his coat so gay ?
He lived at Troutbeck once on a day ;
Now he has gone far, far away ;
We shall ne'er hear his voice in the morning.
For the sound of his horn brought me from my bed,
And the cry of his hounds which he oft-times led,
For Peel's view-hollo would awaken the dead,
Or the fox from his lair in the morning.

Tewkesbury Road

John Masefield

It is good to be out on the road, and going one
 knows not where,
 Going through meadow and village, one knows
 not whither nor why ;
 Through the grey light drift of the dust, in the keen
 cool rush of the air,
 Under the flying white clouds, and the broad blue
 lift of the sky.

And to halt at the chattering brook, in the tall
 green fern at the brink
 Where the harebell grows, and the gorse, and the
 foxgloves purple and white ;
 Where the shy-eyed delicate deer come down in a
 troop to drink
 When the stars are mellow and large at the coming
 on of the night.

O, to feel the beat of the rain, and the homely smell
 of the earth,
 Is a tune for the blood to jig to, a joy past power
 of words ;
 And the blessed green comely meadows are all
 a-ripple with mirth,
 At the noise of the lambs at play and the dear
 wild cry of the birds.

Daffodil

Michael Drayton (1563-1631)

Batte

GORBO, as thou camest this way,
 By yonder little hill,
 Or as thou through the fields did stray,
 Saw'st thou my Daffodil ?

She's in a frock of Lincoln green,
Which colour likes her sight,
And never hath her beauty seen,
But through a veil of white ;

Than roses richer to behold,
That trim up lovers' bowers,
The pansy and the marigold,
Though Phoebus' paramours.

Gorbo

Thou well describ'st the daffodil ;
It is not full an hour,
Since by the spring, near yonder hill,
I saw that lovely flower.

Batte

Yet my fair flower thou didst not meet
Nor news of her didst bring,
And yet my Daffodil's more sweet
Than that by yonder spring.

Gorbo

I saw a shepherd that doth keep
In yonder field of lilies,
Was making (as he fed his sheep)
A wreath of daffodillies.

Batte

Yet, Gorbo, thou delud'st me still,
My flower thou did'st not see ;
For, know, my pretty Daffodil
Is worn of none but me.

To show itself but near her feet
 No lily is so bold,
 Except to shade her from the heat,
 Or keep her from the cold.

Gorbo

Through yonder vale as I did pass,
 Descending from the hill,
 I met a smirking bonny lass,
 They call her Daffodil :

Whose presence, as along she went,
 The pretty flowers did greet,
 As though their heads they downward bent
 With homage to her feet.

And all the shepherds that were nigh,
 From top of every hill,
 Unto the valleys loud did cry,
 There goes sweet Daffodil.

Batte

Ay, gentle shepherd, now with joy
 Thou all my flocks dost fill,
 That's she alone, kind shepherd boy ;
 Let us to Daffodil.

Lying in the Grass

Sir Edmund Gosse

BETWEEN two russet tufts of summer grass,
 I watch the world through hot air as through glass,
 And by my face sweet lights and colours pass.

Before me, dark against the fading sky,
 I watch three mowers mowing, as I lie :
 With brawny arms they sweep in harmony,

Brown English faces by the sun burnt red,
Rich glowing colour on bare throat and head,
My heart would leap to watch them, were I dead !

And in my strong young living as I lie,
I seem to move with them in harmony,—
A fourth is mowing, and that fourth am I.

The music of the scythes that glide and leap,
The young men whistling as their great arms
sweep,
And all the perfume and sweet sense of sleep,

The weary butterflies that droop their wings,
The dreamy nightingale that hardly sings,
And all the lassitude of happy things

Is mingling with the warm and pulsing blood
That gushes through my veins a languid flood,
And feeds my spirit as the sap a bud.

Behind the mowers, on the amber air,
A dark-green beech-wood rises, still and fair,
A white path winding up it like a stair.

And see that girl, with pitcher on her head,
And clean white apron on her gown of red,—
Her even-song of love is but half-said :

She waits the youngest mower. Now he goes ;
Her cheeks are redder than the wild blush-rose ;
They climb up where the deepest shadows close.

But though they pass and vanish, I am there ;
I watch his rough hands meet beneath her hair,
Their broken speech sounds sweet to me like
prayer.

Ah ! now the rosy children come to play,
And romp and struggle with the new-mown hay ;
Their clear high voices sound from far away.

They know so little why the world is sad,
They dig themselves warm graves and yet are glad ;
Their muffled screams and laughter make me mad !

I long to go and play among them there,
Unseen, like wind, to take them by the hair,
And gently make their rosy cheeks more fair.

The happy children ! full of frank surprise,
And sudden whims and innocent ecstasies ;
What godhead sparkles from their liquid eyes !

No wonder round those urns of mingled clays
That Tuscan potters fashion'd in old days,
And coloured like the torrid earth ablaze,

We find the little gods and loves portray'd
Through ancient forests wandering undismay'd,
Or gather'd, whispering, in some pleasant glade.

They knew, as I do now, what keen delight
A strong man feels to watch the tender flight
Of little children playing in his sight.

I do not hunger for a well-stored mind,
I only wish to live my life, and find
My heart in unison with all mankind.

My life is like the single dewy star
That trembles on the horizon's primrose-bar,—
A microcosm where all things living are.

And if, among the noiseless grasses, Death
Should come behind and take away my breath,
I should not rise as one who sorroweth ;

For I should pass, but all the world would be
Full of desire and young delight and glee,
And why should men be sad through loss of me ?

The light is dying ; in the silver-blue
The young moon shines from her bright window
through :

The mowers all are gone, and I go too.

Ode to the West Wind *P. B. Shelley* (1792–1822)

I

O, WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes : O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill :

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere ;
Destroyer and preserver ; hear, O hear !

II

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commo-
tion,

Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning : there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst : O hear !

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them ! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves : O hear !

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear ;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee ;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O, uncontrollable ! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision ; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh ! Lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud !
I fall upon the thorns of life ! I bleed !

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee : tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is :
What if my leaves are falling like its own !
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,
My spirit ! Be thou me, impetuous one !

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth !
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind !
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy ! O, wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind ?

TELL ME A STORY

The Patriot

Robert Browning (1812–1889)

It was roses, roses, all the way,
With myrtle mixed in my path like mad :
The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway,
The church-spires flamed, such flags they had,
A year ago on this very day.

The air broke into a mist with bells,
The old walls rocked with the crowd and cries,
Had I said, “ Good folk, mere noise repels—
But give me your sun from yonder skies ! ”
They had answered, “ And afterward, what else ? ”

Alack, it was I leaped at the sun
To give it my loving-friends to keep !
Nought man could do, have I left undone :
And you see my harvest, what I reap
This very day, now a year is run.

There's nobody on the house-tops now—
Just a palsied few at the windows set ;
For the best of the sight is, all allow,
At the Shambles' Gate—or, better yet,
By the very scaffold's foot, I trow.

I go in the rain, and, more than needs,
A rope cuts both my wrists behind ;
And I think, by the feel, my forehead bleeds,
For they fling, whoever has a mind,
Stones at me for my years misdeeds.

Thus I entered, and thus I go !

In triumphs, people have dropped down dead.

“ Paid by the world, what dost thou owe

Me ? ” God might question ; now instead,

’Tis God shall repay : I am safer so.

Allen-a-Dale

Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832)

ALLEN-A-DALE has no fagot for burning,

Allen-a-Dale has no furrow for turning,

Allen-a-Dale has no fleece for the spinning,

Yet Allen-a-Dale has red gold for the winning.

Come, read me my riddle ! come, hearken my tale !

And tell me the craft of bold Allen-a-Dale.

The Baron of Ravensworth prances in pride,

And he views his domains upon Arkindale side,

The mere for his net, and the land for his game,

The chase for the wild, and the park for the tame,

Yet the fish of the lake, and the deer of the vale,

Are less free to Lord Dacre than Allen-a-Dale !

Allen-a-Dale was ne’er belted a knight,

Though his spur be as sharp, and his blade be as
bright ;

Allen-a-Dale is no baron or lord,

Yet twenty tall yeomen will draw at his word ;

And the best of our nobles his bonnet will vail,

Who at Rere-cross on Stanmore meets Allen-a-Dale.

Allen-a-Dale to his wooing is come ;

The mother, she ask’d of his household and home :

“ Though the castle of Richmond stand fair on the
hill,

My hall,” quoth bold Allen, “ shows gallanter
still ;

'Tis the blue vault of heaven, with its crescent so
pale,
And with all its bright spangles ! ” said Allen-a-
Dale.

The father was steel, and the mother was stone ;
They lifted the latch, and they bade him be gone ;
But loud, on the morrow, their wail and their cry ;
He had laugh'd on the lass with his bonny black eye,
And she fled to the forest to hear a love-tale,
And the youth it was told by was Allen-a-Dale !

Abou Ben Adhem and the Angel

Leigh Hunt (1784-1859)

ABOU BEN ADHEM (may his tribe increase)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold :—
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the presence in the room he said,
“ What writest thou ? ”—The vision raised its
head,
And with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answered, “ The names of those who love the Lord.”
“ And is mine one ? ” said Abou. “ Nay, not so,”
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still ; and said, “ I pray thee then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow men.”

The angel wrote, and vanish'd. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And show'd the names whom love of God had
bless'd,
And lo ! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

Widdecombe Fair

Unknown

"TOM PEARCE, Tom Pearce, lend me your grey mare,"
(All along, down along, out along, lee.)

"For I want for to go to Widdecombe Fair,
Wi' Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney, Peter
Davy,

Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawk,
Old Uncle Tom Cobbley and all,
Old Uncle Tom Cobbley and all.

"And when shall I see again my grey mare ?"
(All along, down along, out along, lee.)

"By Friday soon, or Saturday noon,
Wi' Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney, Peter
Davy,

Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawk,
Old Uncle Tom Cobbley and all,
Old Uncle Tom Cobbley and all.

Then Friday came, and Saturday noon,
(All along, down along, out along, lee.)

But Tom Pearce's old mare hath not trotted home,
Wi' Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney, Peter
Davy,

Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawk,
Old Uncle Tom Cobbley and all,
Old Uncle Tom Cobbley and all.

So Tom Pearce he got up to the top o' the hill,
(All along, down along, out along, lee.)

And he seed his old mare down a-making her will,
Wi' Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney, Peter
Davy,

Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawk,
Old Uncle Tom Cobbley and all,
Old Uncle Tom Cobbley and all.

So Tom Pearce's old mare her took sick and her died,
(All along, down along, out along, lee.)
And Tom he sat down on a stone, and he cried,
Wi' Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney, Peter
Davy,
Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawk,
Old Uncle Tom Cobbley and all,
Old Uncle Tom Cobbley and all.

But this isn't the end o' this shocking affair,
(All along, down along, out along, lee.)
Nor, though they be dead, of the horrid career
Of Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney, Peter
Davy,
Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawk,
Old Uncle Tom Cobbley and all,
Old Uncle Tom Cobbley and all.

When the wind whistles cold on the moor of a night,
(All along, down along, out along, lee.)
Tom Pearce's old mare doth appear, ghastly white,
Wi' Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney, Peter
Davy,
Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawk,
Old Uncle Tom Cobbley and all,
Old Uncle Tom Cobbley and all.

And all the night long be heard skirling and groans,
(All along, down along, out along, lee.)
From Tom Pearce's old mare in her rattling bones,
And from Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney,
Peter Davy,
Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawk,
Old Uncle Tom Cobbley and all,
Old Uncle Tom Cobbley and all.

The Lady Turned Serving-Man *Old Ballad*

You beauteous ladies great and small,
I write unto you, one and all,
Whereby that you may understand
What I have suffer'd in this land.

I was by birth a lady fair,
My father's chief and only heir,
But when my good old father died,
Then I was made a young knight's bride.

And then my love built me a bower,
Bedeck'd with many a fragrant flower ;
A braver bower you ne'er did see
Than my true love did build for me.

But there came thieves late in the night,
They robb'd my bower, and slew my knight,
And after that my knight was slain
I could no longer there remain.

My servants all from me did fly
In the midst of my extremity,
And left me by myself alone
With a heart more cold than any stone.

Yet, though my heart was full of care,
Heaven would not suffer me to despair ;
Wherefore in haste I changed my name
From fair Elise to Sweet William.

And therewithal I cut my hair,
And dress'd myself in man's attire ;
And in my beaver, hose, and band,
I travell'd far through many a land,

With a silver rapier by my side,
So like a gallant I did ride ;
The thing that I delighted on,
It was to be a serving-man.

Thus in my sumptuous man's array
I bravely rode along the way ;
And at the last it chanced so
That I to the king's court did go.

Then to the king I bow'd full low,
My love and duty for to show ;
And so much favour did I crave,
That I a serving-man's place might have.

"Stand up, brave youth," the king replied,
"Thy service shall not be denied ;
But tell me first what thou canst do ;
Thou shalt be fitted thereunto.

"Wilt thou be usher of my hall,
To wait upon my nobles all ?
Or wilt thou be taster of my wine,
To wait on me when I do dine ?

"Or wilt thou be my chamberlain,
To make my bed both soft and fine ?
Or wilt thou be one of my guard ?
And I will give thee thy reward."

Sweet William, with a smiling face,
Said to the king, "If't please your Grace
To show such favour unto me,
Your chamberlain I fain would be."

The king then did the nobles call,
To ask the counsel of them all ;

Who gave consent Sweet William he
The king's own chamberlain should be.

Now mark what strange thing came to pass :
As the king one day a-hunting was,
With all his lords and noble train,
Sweet William did at home remain.

Sweet William had no company then
With him at home, but an old man :
And when he saw the house was clear
He took a lute which he had there :

Upon the lute Sweet William play'd,
And to the same he sang and said,
With a sweet and noble voice,
Which made the old man to rejoice :

“ My father was as brave a lord
As ever Europe did afford,
My mother was a lady bright,
My husband was a valiant knight :

“ And I myself a lady gay,
Bedeck'd with gorgeous rich array ;
The bravest lady in the land
Had not more pleasure at command.

“ I had my music every day,
Harmonious lessons for to play ;
I had my virgins fair and free
Continually to wait on me.

“ But now, alas ! my husband's dead,
And all my friends are from me fled ;
My former joys are pass'd and gone,
For I am now a serving-man.”

At last the king from hunting came,
And presently, upon the same,
He called for this good old man,
And thus to speak the king began :

“What news, what news, old man ?” quoth he ;
“What news hast thou to tell to me ?”
“Brave news,” the old man he did say,
“Sweet William is a lady gay.”

“If this be true thou tell’st to me,
I’ll make thee lord of high degree ;
But if thy words do prove a lie,
Thou shalt be hang’d up presently.”

But when the king the truth had found,
His joys did more and more abound :
According as the old man did say,
Sweet William was a lady gay.

Therefore the king without delay
Put on her glorious rich array,
And upon her head a crown of gold
Which was most famous to behold.

And then, for fear of further strife,
He took Sweet William for his wife ;
The like before was never seen,
A serving-man to be a queen.

The Raven

Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849)

ONCE upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered,
 weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten
 lore,

While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there
came a tapping

As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my
chamber door.

“ ’Tis some visitor,” I mutter’d, “ tapping at my
chamber door—

Only this and nothing more.”

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak Decem-
ber,

And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost
upon the floor.

Eagerly I wish’d the morrow ;—vainly had I sought
to borrow

From my books surcease of sorrow, sorrow for the
lost Lenore—

For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels
name Lenore—

Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple
curtain

Thrill’d me—filled me with fantastic terrors never
felt before ;

So that now to still the beating of my heart, I stood
repeating,

’Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber
door—

Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber
door :—

This it is and nothing more.

Presently my soul grew stronger ; hesitating then
no longer,

“ Sir,” I said, “ or madam, truly your forgiveness
I implore ;

But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came
rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my
chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you," here I open'd
wide the door ;—
Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there
wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to
dream before ;
But the silence was unbroken, and the darkness gave
no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whisper'd
word " Lenore ! "
This I whisper'd, and an echo murmur'd back the
word " Lenore "—
Merely this, and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within
me burning,
Soon I heard again a tapping somewhat louder
than before,
" Surely," said I, " surely that is something at my
window lattice ;
Let me see then what thereat is, and this mystery
explore—
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery
explore ;—
'Tis the wind, and nothing more ! "

Open here I flung a shutter, when with many a flirt
and flutter
In there stepp'd a stately raven of the saintly days
of yore ;

Not the least obeisance made he ; not an instant
stopp'd or stay'd he ;
But with mien of lord or lady, perch'd above my
chamber door—
Perch'd upon a bust of Pallas, just above my chamber
door—
Perch'd and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into
smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance
it wore,
“ Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,” I
said, “ art sure no craven,
Ghastly, grim and ancient raven wandering from the
nightly shore,
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the night's Pluto-
nian shore : ”
Quoth the raven, “ Nevermore ! ”

Much I marvell'd this ungainly fowl to hear discourse
so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy
bore ;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human
being
Ever yet was blest with seeing bird above his cham-
ber door,
Bird or beast upon the sculptur'd bust above his
chamber door,
With such a name as “ Nevermore.”

But the raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust,
spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he
did outpour ;

Nothing further then he utter'd—not a feather
then he flutter'd—
Till I scarcely more than mutter'd, "Other friends
have flown before—
On the morrow he will leave me, as my hopes have
flown before."
Then the bird said "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly
spoken,
"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock
and store,
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful
disaster
Follow'd fast and follow'd faster, till his songs one
burden bore—
Till the dirges of his hope that melancholy burden
bore
Of "Never—nevermore."

But the raven still beguiling all my sad soul into
smiling,
Straight I wheel'd a cushion'd seat in front of bird,
and bust, and door ;
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to
linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird
of yore—
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt and ominous
bird of yore
Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable
expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burnt into my
bosom's core ;

This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease
reclining
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-light
gloated o'er,
But whose velvet violet lining, with the lamp-light
gloating o'er,
She shall press, ah, nevermore !

“ Prophet ! ” said I, “ thing of evil—prophet still,
if bird or devil !
By that heaven that bends above us, by that God
we both adore—
Tell this soul, with sorrow laden, if within the
distant Aidenn
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels
name Lenore—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels
name Lenore.”
Quoth the raven “ Nevermore.”

“ Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend ! ”
I shriek'd, upstarting—
“ Get thee back into the tempest and the night's
Plutonian shore !
Leave no black plume as a token of the lie thy soul
hath spoken !
Leave my loneliness unbroken, quit the bust above
my door !
Take thy beak from out my heart and take thy form
from off my door ! ”
Quoth the raven “ Nevermore.”

And the raven never flitting, still is sitting, still is
sitting,
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber
door ;

And his eyes have all the seeming of a daemon's
that is dreaming,
And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws his
shadow on the floor ;
And my soul from out that shadow that is floating
on the floor
Shall be lifted " Nevermore."

Hiawatha's Canoe *H. W. Longfellow* (1807-1882)

" GIVE me of your bark, O Birch-tree !
Of your yellow bark, O Birch-tree !
Growing by the rushing river,
Tall and stately in the valley !
I a light canoe will build me,
Build a swift Cheemaun ¹ for sailing,
That shall float upon the river,
Like a yellow leaf in Autumn,
Like a yellow water-lily.

" Lay aside your cloak, O Birch-tree !
Lay aside your white-skin wrapper,
For the Summer-time is coming,
And the sun is warm in heaven,
And you need no white-skin wrapper ! "

Thus aloud cried Hiawatha.

And the tree with all its branches
Rustled in the breeze of morning,
Saying, with a sigh of patience,

" Take my cloak, O Hiawatha ! "

With his knife the tree he girdled ;
Just beneath its lowest branches,
Just above the roots he cut it,
Till the sap came oozing outward ;

¹ A birch canoe.

Down the trunk from top to bottom,
Sheer he cleft the back asunder,
With a wooden wedge he raised it,
Stripped it from the trunk unbroken.

“Give me of your boughs, O Cedar !
Of your strong and pliant branches,
My canoe to make more steady,
Make more strong and firm beneath me !”

Through the summit of the Cedar
Went a sound, a cry of horror,
Went a murmur of resistance ;
But it whispered, bending downward,
“Take my boughs, O Hiawatha !”

Down he hewed the boughs of cedar,
Shaped them straightway to a frame-work,
Like two bows he formed and shaped them,
Like two bended bows together.

“Give me of your roots, O Tamarack !
Of your fibrous roots, O Larch-tree !
My canoe to bind together,
So to bind the ends together
That the water may not enter,
That the river may not wet me !”

And the Larch, with all its fibres,
Shivered in the air of morning,
Touched his forehead with its tassels,
Said, with one long sigh of sorrow,
“Take them all, O Hiawatha !”

From the earth he tore the fibres,
Tore the tough roots of the Larch-tree,
Closely sewed the bark together,
Bound it closely to the frame-work.

“Give me of your balm, O Fir-tree !
Of your balsam and your resin,

So to close the seams together
That the water may not enter,
That the river may not wet me ! ”

And the Fir-tree tall and sombre,
Sobbed through all its robes of darkness,
Rattled like a shore with pebbles,
Answered wailing, answered weeping,

“ Take my balm, O Hiawatha ! ”

And he took the tears of balsam,
Took the resin of the Fir-tree,
Smeared therewith each seam and fissure,
Made each crevice safe from water.

“ Give me of your quills, O Hedgehog !
All your quills, O Kagh, the Hedgehog !
I will make a necklace of them,
Make a girdle for my beauty,
And two stars to deck her bosom ! ”

From a hollow tree the Hedgehog
With his sleepy eyes looked at him,
Shot his shining quills, like arrows,
Saying with a drowsy murmur,
Through the tangle of his whiskers,

“ Take my quills, O Hiawatha ! ”

From the ground the quills he gathered,
All the little shining arrows,
Stained them red and blue and yellow,
With the juice of roots and berries ;
Into his canoe he wrought them,
Round its waist a shining girdle,
Round its bows a gleaming necklace,
On its breast two stars resplendent.

Thus the Birch Canoe was builded,
In the valley, by the river,
In the bosom of the forest ;
And the forest's life was in it,

All its mystery and its magic,
All the lightness of the birch-tree,
All the toughness of the cedar,
All the larch's supple sinews ;
And it floated on the river
Like a yellow leaf in Autumn,
Like a yellow water-lily.

The Lady of Shalott *Lord Tennyson (1809 -1892)*

Part I

ON either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky ;
And thro' the field the road runs by
 To many-tower'd Camelot ;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow,
Round an island there below,
 The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.
Four grey walls, and four grey towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses ; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
 Skimming down to Camelot :

But who hath seen her wave her hand ?
Or at the casement seen her stand ?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott ?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to tower'd Camelot :
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers " 'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

Part II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay,
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care has she
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot :
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot ;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two ;
She hath no loyal knight and true ;
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And Music, went to Camelot ;
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed,
"I am half sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

Part III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot :

And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd ;
On burnished hooves his war-horse trode ;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flashed into the crystal mirror.
"Tirra lirra," by the river,
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She looked down to Camelot ;
Out flew the web and floated wide ;
The mirror crack'd from side to side ;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

Part IV

In the stormy east wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining

Over tower'd Camelot ;
Down she came and found a boat,
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
"The Lady of Shalott."

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeking all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain and down she lay ;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot :
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Hear a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.

For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
"The Lady of Shalott."

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in His mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

The Ballad of East and West *Rudyard Kipling*

*Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the
twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great
Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed,
nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they
come from the ends of the earth!*

Kamal is out with twenty men to raise the Border-side,

And he has lifted the Colonel's mare that is the Colonel's pride :

He has lifted her out of the stable-door between the dawn and the day,

And turned the calkins upon her feet, and ridden her far away.

Then up and spoke the Colonel's son that led a troop of the Guides :

"Is there never a man of all my men can say where Kamal hides ? "

Then up and spoke Mahommed Khan, the son of the Ressaldar :

"If ye know the track of the morning-mist, ye know where his pickets are.

At dusk he harries the Abazai—at dawn he is into Bonair,

But he must go by Fort Bukloh to his own place to fare.

So if ye gallop to Fort Bukloh as fast as a bird can fly,

By the favour of God ye may cut him off ere he win to the Tongue of Jagai.

But if he be past the Tongue of Jagai, right swiftly turn ye then,

For the length and the breadth of that grisly plain is sown with Kamal's men.

There is rock to the left, and rock to the right, and low lean thorn between,

And ye may hear a breech-bolt snick where never a man is seen."

The Colonel's son has taken a horse, and a raw rough dun was he,

With the mouth of a bell and the heart of Hell and the head of the gallows-tree.

The Colonel's son to the Fort has won, they bid
him stay to eat—
Who rides at the tail of a Border thief, he sits not
long at his meat.
He's up and away from Fort Bukloh as fast as he
can fly,
Till he was aware of his father's mare in the gut of
the Tongue of Jagai,
Till he was aware of his father's mare with Kamal
upon her back,
And when he could spy the white of her eye, he
made the pistol crack.
He has fired once, he has fired twice, but the whist-
ling ball went wide.
“Ye shoot like a soldier,” Kamal said. “Show
now if ye can ride.”
It's up and over the Tongue of Jagai, as blown
dust-devils go,
The dun he fled like a stag of ten, but the mare
like a barren doe.
The dun he leaned against the bit and slugged his
head above,
But the red mare played with the snaffle-bars, as
a maiden plays with a glove.
There was rock to the left and rock to the right,
and low lean thorn between,
And thrice he heard a breech-bolt snick tho' never
a man was seen.
They have ridden the low moon out of the sky,
their hoofs drum up the dawn,
The dun he went like a wounded bull, but the
mare like a new-roused fawn.
The dun he fell at a water-course—in a woful heap
fell he,
And Kamal has turned the red mare back, and
pulled the rider free.

He has knocked the pistol out of his hand—small
room was there to strive,
“ ’Twas only by favour of mine,” quoth he, “ ye
rode so long alive :
There was not a rock for twenty mile, there was
not a clump of tree,
But covered a man of my own men with his rifle
cocked on his knee.
If I had raised my bridle-hand, as I have held it
low,
The little jackals that flee so fast were feasting all
in a row :
If I had bowed my head on my breast, as I have
held it high,
The kite that whistles above us now were gorged
till she could not fly.”
Lightly answered the Colonel’s son : “ Do good to
bird and beast,
But count who come for the broken meats before
thou makest a feast.
If there should follow a thousand swords to carry
my bones away,
Belike the price of a jackal’s meal were more than
a thief could pay.
They will feed their horse on the standing crop,
their men on the garnered grain,
The thatch of the byres will serve their fires when
all the cattle are slain.
But if thou thinkest the price be fair,—thy brethren
wait to sup,
The hound is kin to the jackal-spawn,—howl, dog,
and call them up !
And if thou thinkest the price be high, in steer and
gear and stack,
Give me my father’s mare again, and I’ll fight my
own way back ! ”

Kamal has gripped him by the hand and set him upon his feet.

“No talk shall be of dogs,” said he, “when wolf and grey wolf meet.

May I eat dirt if thou hast hurt of me in deed or breath ;

What dam of lances brought thee forth to jest at the dawn with Death ? ”

Lightly answered the Colonel’s son : “I hold by the blood of my clan ;

Take up the mare for my father’s gift—by God, she has carried a man ! ”

The red mare ran to the Colonel’s son, and nuzzled against his breast ;

“We be two strong men,” said Kamal then, “but she loveth the younger best.

So she shall go with a lifter’s dower, my turquoise-studded rein,

My broidered saddle and saddle-cloth, and silver stirrups twain.”

The Colonel’s son a pistol drew and held it muzzle-end,

“Ye have taken the one from a foe,” said he ; “will ye take the mate from a friend ? ”

“A gift for a gift,” said Kamal straight ; “a limb for the risk of a limb.

Thy father has sent his son to me, I’ll send my son to him ! ”

With that he whistled his only son, that dropped from a mountain-crest—

He trod the ling like a buck in spring, and he looked like a lance in rest.

“Now here is thy master,” Kamal said, “who leads a troop of the Guides,

And thou must ride at his left side as shield on shoulder rides.

Till Death or I cut loose the tie, at camp and board
and bed,

Thy life is his—thy fate it is to guard him with
thy head.

So, thou must eat the White Queen's meat, and all
her foes are thine,

And thou must harry thy father's hold for the
peace of the Border-line.

And thou must make a trooper tough and hack
thy way to power—

Belike they will raise thee to Ressaldar when I am
hanged in Peshawur."

They have looked each other between the eyes, and
there they found no fault,

They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood
on leavened bread and salt :

They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood
on fire and fresh-cut sod,

On the hilt and the haft of the Khyber knife, and
the Wondrous Names of God.

The Colonel's son he rides the mare and Kamal's
boy the dun,

And two have come back to Fort Bukloh where
there went forth but one.

And when they drew to the Quarter-Guard, full
twenty swords flew clear—

There was not a man but carried his feud with the
blood of the mountaineer.

"Ha' done ! ha' done !" said the Colonel's son.

"Put up the steel at your sides !

Last night ye had struck at a Border thief—to-
night 'tis a man of the Guides !"

*Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the
twain shall meet,*

*Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great
Judgment Seat ;*

*But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed,
nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they
come from the ends of the earth!*

INTO BATTLE

To Lucasta : Going to the Wars

Richard Lovelace (1618-1658)

TELL me not, sweet, I am unkind,
That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
To war and arms I fly.

True : a new Mistress now I chase,
The first foe in the field ;
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such,
As you too shall adore ;
I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Lov'd I not Honour more.

The Red Cross Knight *E. Spenser (1552-1599)*

A GENTLE knight was pricking on the plain,
Yclad in mighty arms and silver shield,
Wherein old dints of deep wounds did remain,
The cruel marks of many a bloody field ;
Yet arms till that time did he never wield.
His angry steed did chide his foaming bit,
As much disdainng to the curb to yield :
Full jolly knight he seemed and fair did sit,
As one for knightly jousts and fierce encounters fit.

And on his breast a bloody cross he bore,
 The dear remembrance of his dying Lord,
 For whose sweet sake that glorious badge he wore,
 And dead, as living, ever Him adored :
 Upon his shield the like was also scored,
 For sovereign hope, which in his help he had.
 Right faithful true he was in deed and word ;
 But of his cheer did seem too solemn sad :
 Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad.

Sir Ector to the Dead Knight

Theodore Goodridge Roberts

" I dare say," said Sir Ector, " thou, Sir Launcelot, there thou liest, that thou were never matched of earthly knight's hand."

Sir T. Malory.

THE hills are dark, the woods are cold to-day,
 Sir Launcelot, since your soul has passed away,
 Leaving the sword dead iron, the body clay.

Who now will show us, sir (that you are dead)
 The brave, great path a Christian knight must tread

Ah, Launcelot, in what press of noble knights
 Found you your equal ? By its truest lights
 The wide land knew you master of stark fights.

The whole land knew you courtliest of those
 That filled the lists with clangour of their blows.

Empty those lists ! Stilled now the crashing din
 That drowned the trumpets when you thundered
 in ;
 Now, when you may not rise, they prate of sin !

The woods are dark. Full sad the trampled field
That Launcelot rides no more, with covered shield.

Astride your horse, in burnished armour dressed,
With sword at side and naked spear in rest,
An awful knight, you fought for those distressed.

Invincible, unpitying as Fate !
Who lives, that felt the wonder of your hate ?

To the long halls where ladies sat at meat
You came, with laughing eyes and quiet feet,
Kind with the helpless, gentle with the sweet.

And now, Sir Launcelot, do they note at all
Your empty seat half down the merry hall ?

If in high Heaven, for good knights and true,
A court is held beneath the arches blue,
To some high siege the saints will beckon you.

Ah, sir, I trow that you grace braver field
The while I bide to guard the fallen shield.

The Gilliflower of Gold *W. Morris* (1834–1896)

A GOLDEN gilliflower to-day
I wore upon my helm alway
And won the prize of this tourney.
Hah ! hah ! la belle jaune giroflée.

However well Sir Giles might sit,
His sun was weak to wither it,
Lord Miles's blood was dew on it :
Hah ! hah ! la belle jaune giroflée.

Although my spear in splinters flew,
 From John's steel-coat, my eye was true ;
 I wheeled about, and cried for you,
Hah ! hah ! la belle jaune giroflée.

Yea, do not doubt my heart was good,
 Though my spear flew like rotten wood,
 To shout, although I scarcely stood,
Hah ! hah ! la belle jaune giroflée.

My hand was steady too, to take
 My axe from round my neck, and break
 John's steel-coat up for my love's sake.
Hah ! hah ! la belle jaune giroflée.

When I stood in my tent again,
 Arming afresh, I felt a pain,
 Take hold of me, I was so fain,
Hah ! hah ! la belle jaune giroflée.

To hear : *Honneur aux fils des preux !*
 Right in my ears again, and show
 The gilliflower blossomed new.
Hah ! hah ! la belle jaune giroflée.

The Sieur Guillaume against me came,
 His tabard bore three points of flame,
 From a red heart : with little blame,
Hah ! hah ! la belle jaune giroflée.

Our tough spears crackled up like straw,
 He was the first to turn and draw
 His sword, that had nor speck nor flaw ;
Hah ! hah ! la belle jaune giroflée.

But I felt weaker than a maid,
 And my brain, dizzied and afraid,
 Within my helm a fierce tune played,
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

Until I thought of your dear head,
 Bowed to the gilliflower bed,
 The yellow flowers stained with red;
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

Crash! how the swords met: *giroflée!*
 The fierce tune in my helm would play,
La belle! la belle! jaune giroflée!
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

Once more the great swords met again:
 “*La belle! la belle!*” but who fell then?
 Le Sieur Guillaume, who struck down ten;
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

And as with mazed and unarmed face,
 Toward my own crown and the Queen's place,
 They led me at a gentle pace,
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

I almost saw your quiet head
 Bowed o'er the gilliflower bed,
 The yellow flowers stained with red.
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

Romance of Dunois Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832)

It was Dunois, the young and brave, was bound for
 Palestine,
 But first he made his orisons before St. Mary's
 shrine:

“ And grant, immortal Queen of Heaven,” was still
the soldier’s prayer,
“ That I may prove the bravest knight, and love
the fairest fair.”

His oath of honour on the shrine he graved it with
his sword,
And followed to the Holy Land the banner of his
Lord ;
Where, faithful to his noble vow, his war-cry filled
the air,
“ Be honoured aye the bravest knight, beloved the
fairest fair.”

They owed the conquest to his arm, and then his
Liege-Lord said :
“ The heart that has for honour beat by bliss must
be repaid.
My daughter Isabel and thou shall be a wedded pair,
For thou art bravest of the brave, she fairest of the
fair.”

And then they bound the holy knot before St.
Mary’s shrine,
That makes a paradise on earth, if hearts and
hands combine ;
And every lord and lady bright, that were in chapel
there,
Cried, “ Honoured be the bravest knight, beloved
the fairest fair ! ”

Saint George of England *Cecily Fox Smith*

SAINT GEORGE he was a fighting man, as all the
tales do tell ;
He fought a battle long ago, and fought it wondrous
well.

With his helmet, and his hauberk, and his good
cross-hilted sword,

Oh, he rode a-slaying dragons to the glory of the
Lord.

And when his time on earth was done, he found he
could not rest

Where the year is always summer in the Islands of
the Blest ;

So back he came to earth again, to see what he could
do,

And they cradled him in England—

In England, April England—

Oh, they cradled him in England where the golden
willows blew !

Saint George he was a fighting man, and loved a
fighting breed,

And whenever England wants him now, he's ready
at her need ;

From Crècy field to Neuve Chapelle he's there with
hand and sword,

And he sailed with Drake from Devon to the glory
of the Lord.

His arm is strong to smite the wrong and break
the tyrant's pride,

He was there when Nelson triumphed, he was there
when Gordon died ;

He sees his red-cross ensign float on all the winds
that blow,

But ah ! his heart's in England—

In England, April England—

Oh, his heart it turns to England where the golden
willows grow.

Saint George he was a fighting man, he's here and
fighting still

While anv wrong is vet to right. or Dragon vet to kill.

And faith ! he's finding work this day to suit his
 war-worn sword.
 For he's strafing Huns in Flanders to the glory of
 the Lord.
 Saint George he is a fighting man, but when the
 fighting's past,
 And dead among the trampled fields the fiercest
 and the last
 Of all the Dragons earth has known beneath his
 feet lies low,
 Oh, his heart will turn to England—
 To England, April England—
 He'll come home to rest in England where the
 golden willows blow !

The Turkish Trench Dog *Geoffrey Dearmer*

NIGHT held me as I crawled and scrambled near
 The Turkish lines. Above, the mocking stars
 Silvered the curving parapet, and clear
 Cloud-latticed beams o'erflecked the land with bars ;
 I, crouching, lay between
 Tense-listening armies, peering through the night,
 Twin giants bound by tentacles unseen.
 Here in dim-shadowed light
 I saw him, as a sudden movement turned
 His eyes toward me, glowing eyes that burned
 A moment ere his snuffling muzzle found
 My trail ; and then as serpents mesmerize
 He chained me with those unrelenting eyes,
 That muscle-sliding rhythm, knit and bound
 In spare-limbed symmetry, those perfect jaws
 And soft approaching pitter-patter paws.
 Nearer and nearer like a wolf he crept—
 That moment had my swift revolver leapt—
 But terror seized me, terror born of shame
 Brought flooding revelation. For he came

As one who offers comradeship deserved,
 An open ally of the human race,
 And sniffing at my prostrate form unnerved
 He licked my face.

Henry V before Agincourt

John Lydgate (1370 ?–1451 ?)

OUR King went up upon a hill high
 And looked down to the valleys low :
 He saw where the Frenchmen came hastily
 As thick as ever hail or snow.
 Then kneeled our King down in that stound,¹
 And all his men on every side :
 Every man made a cross and kissed the ground,
 And on their feet fast 'gan abide.
 Our King said : "Sirs, what time of the day !"
 "My Liege," they said, "it is nigh Prime."
 "Then go we to our journey,
 By the grace of Jesu, it is good time :
 For saints that lie in their shrine
 To God for us be praying
 All the Religious of England in this time
Ora pro nobis for us they sing."
 St. George was seen over the host :
 Of very truth this sight men did see.
 Down was he sent by the Holy Ghost,
 To give our King the victory . . .

Henry V before Harfleur

William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

ONCE more unto the breach, dear friends, once more ;
 Or close the wall up with our English dead.
 In peace there's nothing so becomes a man

¹ Moment.

As modest stillness and humility :
 But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
 Then imitate the action of the tiger ;
 Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,
 Disguise fair nature with hard-favour'd rage ;
 Then lend the eye a terrible aspect ;
 Let it pry through the portage of the head
 Like the brass cannon ; let the brow o'erwhelm it
 As fearfully as doth a gallèd rock
 O'erhang and jutty his confounded base,
 Swill'd with the wild and wasteful ocean.
 Now set the teeth and stretch the nostril wide,
 Hold hard the breath and bend up every spirit
 To his full height. On, on, you noblest English,
 Whose blood is fet from fathers of war-proof !
 Fathers that, like so many Alexanders,
 Have in these parts from morn till even fought
 And sheathed their swords for lack of argument :
 Dishonour not your mothers ; now attest
 That those whom you call'd fathers did beget you.
 Be copy now to men of grosser blood,
 And teach them how to war. And you, good
 yeomen,
 Whose limbs were made in England, show us
 here
 The mettle of your pasture ; let us swear
 That you are worth your breeding ; which I doubt
 not ;
 For there is none of you so mean and base,
 That hath not noble lustre in your eyes.
 I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,
 Straining upon the start. The game's afoot :
 Follow your spirit, and upon this charge
 Cry " God for Harry, England and Saint George ! "

Waterloo*Lord Byron (1788–1824)*

THERE was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men.
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage bell;
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising
knell!

Did ye not hear it?—No; 'twas but the wind,
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing hours with flying feet.
But hark!—that heavy sound breaks in once
more
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
Arm! arm! it is—it is—the cannon's opening
roar!

Within a windowed niche of that high hall
Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain; he did hear
That sound, the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear;
And when they smiled because he deemed it near,
His heart more truly knew that peal too well
Which stretched his father on a bloody bier,
And roused the vengeance blood alone could
quell.
He rushed into the field, and, foremost fighting,
fell.

Ah ! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
 And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
 And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
 Blushed at the praise of their own loveliness ;
 And there were sudden partings, such as press
 The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
 Which ne'er might be repeated : who could guess
 If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
 Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could
 rise !

And there was mounting in hot haste : the steed,
 The mustering squadron and the clattering car,
 Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
 And swiftly forming in the ranks of war :
 And the deep thunder peal on peal afar ;
 And near, the beat of the alarming drum
 Roused up the soldier ere the morning star ;
 While thronged the citizens with terror dumb,
 Or whispering with white lips—"The foe ! They
 come ! they come !"

And wild and high the "Cameron's gathering" rose !
 The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's hills
 Have heard, and heard, too, have her Saxon foes ;
 How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills,
 Savage and shrill ! But with the breath which fills
 Their mountain pipe, so fill the mountaineers
 With the fierce native daring which instils
 The stirring memory of a thousand years,
 And Evan's, Donald's fame rings in each clansman's
 ears !

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
 Dewy with Nature's tear-drops, as they pass,
 Grieving, if ought inanimate e'er grieves,
 Over the unreturning brave,—alas !

Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
 Which now beneath them, but above shall grow
 In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
 Of living valour, rolling on the foe,
 And burning with high hope, shall moulder, cold
 and low.

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
 Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
 The midnight brought the signal sound of strife,
 The morn the marshalling in arms—the day
 Battle's magnificently stern array !
 The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent
 The earth is covered thick with other clay,
 Which her own clay shall cover, heaped and pent,
 Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red burial
 blent !

Into Battle

Julian Grenfell (1888–1915)

THE naked earth is warm with spring,
 And with green grass and bursting trees
 Leans to the sun's gaze glorying,
 And quivers in the sunny breeze ;
 And life is colour and warmth and light,
 And a striving evermore for these ;
 And he is dead who will not fight ;
 And who dies fighting has increase.

The fighting man shall from the sun
 Take warmth, and life from the glowing earth ;
 Speed with the light-foot winds to run,
 And with the trees to newer birth ;
 And find, when fighting shall be done,
 Great rest, and fullness after dearth.

All the bright company of Heaven
 Hold him in their high comradeship,
 The Dog-Star, and the Sisters Seven,
 Orion's Belt and sworded hip.

The woodland trees that stand together,
 They stand to him each one a friend ;
 They gently speak in the windy weather ;
 They guide to valley and ridge's end.

The kestrel hovering by day,
 And the little owls that call by night,
 Bid him be swift and keen as they,
 As keen of ear, as swift of sight.

The blackbird sings to him " Brother, brother,
 If this be the last song you shall sing,
 Sing well, for you may not sing another ;
 Brother, sing."

In dreary, doubtful, waiting hours,
 Before the brazen frenzy starts,
 The horses show him nobler powers ;
 O patient eyes, courageous hearts !

And when the burning moment breaks,
 And all things else are out of mind,
 And only joy of battle takes
 Him by the throat, and makes him blind,

Through joy and blindness he shall know,
 Not caring much to know, that still
 Nor lead nor steel shall reach him, so
 That it be not the Destined Will.

The thundering line of battle stands,
 And in the air death moans and sings ;
 But Day shall clasp him with strong hands
 And Night shall fold him in soft wings.

On the Death of Sir Philip Sidney*Sir Walter Raleigh (1552 ?–1618)*

THERE didst thou vanquish shame and tedious age,
 Grief, sorrow, sickness, and base Fortune's might :
 Thy rising day saw never woeful night,
 But passed with praise from off this worldly stage.

Back to the camp by thee that day was brought,
 First, thine own death ; and after, thy long fame ;
 Tears to the soldiers ; the proud Castilians' shame ;
 Virtue expressed, and honour truly taught.

What hath he lost that such great grace hath won ?
 Young years for endless years, and hope unsure
 Of Fortune's gifts for wealth that still shall dure :
 O happy race, with so great praises run !

A Jacobite's Epitaph *Lord Macaulay (1800–1859)*

To my true king I offered free from stain
 Courage and faith ; vain faith, and courage vain.
 For him I threw lands, honours, wealth, away,
 And one dear hope, that was more prized than
 they.

For him I languished in a foreign clime,
 Grey-haired with sorrow in my manhood's prime ;
 Heard on Lavernia Scargill's whispering trees,
 And pined by Arno for my lovelier Tees ;
 Beheld each night my home in fevered sleep,
 Each morning started from the dream to weep ;
 Till God, who saw me tried too sorely, gave
 The resting-place I asked, an early grave.
 O thou, whom chance leads to this nameless stone,
 From that proud country which was once mine
 own.

By those white cliffs I never more must see,
By that dear language which I spake like thee,
Forget all feuds, and shed one English tear
O'er English dust. A broken heart lies here.

In Flanders Fields

John McCrae

IN Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place ; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly,
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe ;
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch ; be yours to hold it high !
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

The Dead

Rupert Brooke (1887-1915)

BLOW out, you bugles, over the rich Dead !
There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,
But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.
These laid the world away ; poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth ; gave up the years to be
Of work and joy, and that unhopèd serene,
That men call age ; and those who would have
been,
Their sons, they gave, their immortality.

Blow, bugles, blow! They brought us, for our
dearth,

Holiness, lacked so long, and Love, and Pain.

Honour has come back, as a king, to earth,

And paid his subjects with a royal wage;

And Nobleness walks in our ways again;

And we have come into our heritage.

TO SEA !

Neptune's Empire *Thomas Campion* (?-1619)

OF Neptune's Empire let us sing,
At whose command the waves obey ;
To whom the rivers tribute pay,
Down the high mountains sliding :
To whom the scaly nation yields
Homage for the crystal fields
Wherein they dwell ;
And every sea-god pays a gem
Yearly out of his watery cell,
To deck great Neptune's diadem !

The Tritons dancing in a ring,
Before his palace gates do make
The water with their echoes quake,
Like the great thunder sounding :
The sea-nymphs chant their accents shrill,
And the Sirens taught to kill
With their sweet voice,
Make every echoing rock reply,
Under their gentle murmuring noise,
In praise of Neptune's empire.

Cargoes *John Masefield*

QUINQUIREME of Nineveh from distant Ophir
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,
With a cargo of ivory,
And apes and peacocks,
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.

Stately Spanish galleon coming from the Isthmus
 Dipping through the Tropics by the palm-green
 shores,
 With a cargo of diamonds,
 Emeralds, amethysts,
 Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores.

Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke
 stack,
 Butting through the Channel in the mad March
 days,
 With a cargo of Tyne coal,
 Road-rails, pig-lead,
 Firewood, iron-ware, and cheap tin trays.

The Sea

John Keats (1795–1821)

It keeps eternal whisperings around
 Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell
 Gluts twice ten thousand caverns, till the spell
 Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.
 Often 'tis in such gentle temper found,
 That scarcely will the very smallest shell
 Be moved for days from whence it sometime
 fell,
 When last the winds of heaven were unbound.
 Oh ye ! who have your eye-balls vexed and tired,
 Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea ;
 Oh ye ! whose ears are dinned with uproar rude,
 Or fed too much with cloying melody—
 Sit ye near some old cavern's mouth, and brood
 Until ye start, as if the sea nymphs quired !

Trafalgar*Thomas Hardy*

IN the wild October night-time, when the wind
raved round the land,
And the Back-sea met the Front-sea and our doors
were blocked with sand,
And we heard the drub of Dead-man's Bay, where
bones of thousands are,
We knew not what the day had done for us at
Trafalgàr.

Had done,
Had done,
For us at Trafalgàr.

“ Pull hard, and make the Nothe, or down we go ! ”
one says, says he.
We pulled ; and bedtime brought the storm ; but snug
at home slept we,
Yet all the while our gallants after fighting through
the day,
Were beating up and down the dark, sou'-west of
Cadiz Bay.

The dark,
The dark,
Sou'-west of Cadiz Bay !

The victors and the vanquished then the storm it
tossed and tore,
As hard they strove, those worn-out men, upon
that surly shore ;
Dead Nelson and his half-dead crew, his foes from
near and far,
Were rolled together on the deep that night at Tra-
falgàr !

The deep,
The deep,
That night at Trafalgàr.

Drake's Drum*Sir Henry Newbolt*

Drake he's in his hammock an' a thousand mile
away,

(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below ?),
Slung atween the round shot in Nombre Dios Bay,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Yarnder lumes the Island, yarnder lie the ships,
Wi' sailor lads a dancin' heel-an'-toe,
An' the shore-lights flashin', an' the night-tide
dashin',

He sees et arl so plainly as he saw et long ago.

Drake he was a Devon man, an' rüled the Devon seas,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below ?),
Rovin' tho' his death fell, he went wi' heart at ease,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
"Take my drum to England, hang et by the shore,
Strike et when your powder's runnin' low ;
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port o' Heaven,
An' drum them up the Channel as we drummed
them long ago."

Drake he's in his hammock till the great Armadas
come,

(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below ?),
Slung atween the round shot, listenin' for the drum,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Call him on the deep sea, call him up the Sound,
Call him when ye sail to meet the foe ;
Where the old trade's plyin' an' the old flag flyin'
They shall find him ware an' wakin', as they found
him long ago

The Changeless Sea *Lord Byron (1788–1824)*

THERE is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep Sea, and music in its roar :
I love not man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal.

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean—roll !
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain ;
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
Stops with the shore ;—upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
Without a grave, unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown.

His steps are not upon thy paths,—thy fields
Are not a spoil for him—thou dost arise
And shake him from thee ; the vile strength he
wields
For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
And send'st him, shivering in thy playful spray
And howling, to his gods, where haply lies
His petty hope in some near port or bay,
And dashest him again to earth :—there let him
lay.

The armaments which thunder-strike the walls
Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake,
And monarchs tremble in their capitals,
The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
Their clay creator the vain title take
Of lord of thee, and arbitor of war :
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar
Alike the Armada's pride, or spoils of Trafalgar.

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save
thee :

Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are
they ?

Thy waters wasted them while they were free,
And many a tyrant since ; their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage ; their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts : not so thou,
Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play—
Time writes no wrinkle on thy azure brow—
Such as Creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempest ; in all time,
Calm or convulsed—in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark heaving ; boundless, endless, and sublime—
The image of Eternity—the throne
Of the Invisible ; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made ; each zone
Obeys thee ; thou goest forth dread, fathomless,
alone.

And I have loved thee, Ocean ! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne, like thy bubbles, onward : from a boy
I wanted with thy breakers—they to me

Were a delight ; and if the freshening sea
Made them a terror, 'twas a pleasing fear,
For I was, as it were, a child of thee,
And trusted to thy billows far and near,
And laid my hand upon thy mane—as I do here.

The Old Ships *James Elroy Flecker* (1884-1915)

I HAVE seen old ships sail like swans asleep
Beyond the village which men still call Tyre,
With leaden age o'ercargoed, dipping deep
For Famagusta and the hidden sun
That rings black Cyprus with a lake of fire ;
And all those ships were certainly so old
Who knows how oft with squat and noisy gun,
Questing brown slaves or Syrian oranges,
The pirate Genoese
Hell-raked them till they rolled
Blood, water, fruit, and corpses up the hold !
But now through friendly seas they softly run,
Painted the mid-sea blue or shore-sea green,
Still patterned with the vine and grapes in gold.

But I have seen,
Pointing her shapely shadows from the dawn
And image tumbled on a rose-swept bay,
A drowsy ship of some yet older day ;
And, wonder's breath indrawn,
Thought I—who knows—who knows—but in that
 same
(Fished up beyond Æaea, patched up new
—Stern painted brighter blue)
That talkative, bald-headed seaman came
(Twelve patient comrades sweating at the oar)
From Troy's doom-crimson shore,
And with great lies about his wooden horse
Set the crew laughing and forgot his course.

It was so old a ship—who knows, who knows ?
 —And yet so beautiful, I watched in vain
 To see the mast burst open with a rose,
 And the whole deck put on its leaves again.

The Spanish Armada *Lord Macaulay* (1800–1859)

ATTEND, all ye who list to hear our noble England's
 praise ;
 I tell of the thrice-famous deeds she wrought in
 ancient days,
 When that great fleet invincible against her bore in
 vain
 The richest spoils of Mexico, the stoutest hearts of
 Spain.

It was about the lovely close of a warm summer
 day,
 There came a gallant merchant-ship full sail to
 Plymouth Bay ;
 Her crew had seen Castile's black fleet beyond
 Aurigny's Isle,
 At earliest twilight, on the waves, lie heaving many
 a mile.
 At sunrise she escaped their van, by God's especial
 grace ;
 And the tall Pinta, till the noon, had held her close
 in chase.
 Forthwith a guard at every gun was placed along
 the wall ;
 The beacon blazed upon the roof of Edgecombe's
 lofty hall ;
 Many a light fishing bark put out to pry along the
 coast,
 And with loose rein and bloody spur rode inland
 many a post.

With his white hair unbonneted, the stout old sheriff
comes :

Behind him march the halberdiers ; before him
sound the drums ;

His yeomen round the market cross make clear an
ample space ;

For there behoves him to set up the standard of
Her Grace.

And haughtily the trumpets peal, and gaily dance
the bells,

And slow upon the labouring wind the royal blazon
swells.

Look how the Lion of the sea lifts up his ancient
crown,

And underneath his deadly paw treads the gay lilies
down.

So stalked he when he turned to fight, on that famed
Picard field,

Bohemia's plume, and Genoa's bow, and Cæsar's
eagle shield.

So glared he when at Agincourt in wrath he turned
at bay,

And crushed and torn beneath his claws the princely
hunters lay.

Ho ! strike the flagstaff deep, Sir Knight : ho !
scatter flowers, fair maids :

Ho ! gunners, fire a loud salute : ho ! gallants, draw
your blades.

Thou sun, shine on her joyously : ye breezes, waft
her wide ;

Our glorious SEMPER EADEM, the banner of our
pride.

The freshening breeze of eve unfurled that banner's
massy fold ;

The parting gleam of sunshine kissed that haughty
scroll of gold ;

Night sank upon the dusky beach, and on the purple
 sea,
 Such night in England ne'er had been, nor ne'er
 again shall be.
 From Eddystone to Berwick bounds, from Lynn
 to Milford Bay,
 That time of slumber was as bright and busy as
 the day ;
 For swift to east and swift to west the ghastly war-
 flame spread,
 High on St. Michael's Mount it shone ; it shone on
 Beachy Head.
 Far o'er the deep the Spaniard saw, along each south-
 ern shire,
 Cape beyond cape, in endless range, those twinkling
 points of fire.
 The fisher left his skiff to rock on Tamar's glittering
 waves :
 The rugged miners poured to war from Mendip's
 sunless caves :
 O'er Longleat's towers, o'er Cranbourne's oaks, the
 fiery herald flew :
 He roused the shepherds of Stonehenge, the rangers
 of Beaulieu.
 Right sharp and quick the bells all night rang out
 from Bristol town,
 And ere the day three hundred horse had met on
 Clifton Down ;
 The sentinel on Whitehall gate looked forth into the
 night,
 And saw o'erhanging Richmond Hill the streak of
 blood-red light ;
 Then bugle's note and cannon's roar the death-like
 silence broke,
 And with one start and with one cry, the royal city
 woke.

At once on all her stately gates arose the answering
fires ;
At once the wild alarum clashed from all her reeling
spires ;
From all the batteries of the Tower pealed loud the
voice of fear ;
And all the thousand masts of Thames sent back a
louder cheer ;
And from the furthest wards was heard the rush
of hurrying feet,
And the broad streams of pikes and flags rushed
down each roaring street ;
And broader still became the blaze, and louder still
the din,
As fast from every village round the horse came
spurring in :
And eastward straight from wild Blackheath the
warlike errand went,
And roused in many an ancient hall the gallant
squires of Kent.
Southward from Surrey's pleasant hills flew those
bright couriers forth ;
High on bleak Hampstead's swarthy moor they
started for the north ;
And on, and on, without a pause, untired they
bounded still :
All night from tower to tower they sprang ; they
sprang from hill to hill ;
Till the proud Peak unfurl'd the flag o'er Darwen's
rocky dales,
Till like volcanoes flared to heaven the stormy hills
of Wales.
Till twelve fair counties saw the blaze on Malvern's
lonely height,
Till streamed in crimson on the wind the Wrekin's
crest of light,

Till broad and fierce the star came forth on Ely's
 stately fane,
 And tower and hamlet rose in arms o'er all the
 boundless plain ;
 Till Belvoir's lordly terraces the sign to Lincoln sent,
 And Lincoln sped the message on o'er the wide vale
 of Trent ;
 Till Skiddaw saw the fire that burned on Gaunt's
 embattled pile,
 And the red glare on Skiddaw roused the burghers
 of Carlisle.

The Forsaken Merman *M. Arnold* (1822–1888)

COME, dear children, let us away ;
 Down and away below !
 Now my brothers call from the bay,
 Now the great winds shoreward blow,
 Now the salt tides seaward flow ;
 Now the wild white horses play,
 Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
 Children dear, let us away !
 This way, this way !

Call her once before you go—
 Call once yet !
 In a voice that she will know :
 “ Margaret ! Margaret ! ”
 Children's voices should be dear
 (Call once more) to a mother's ear ;
 Children's voices, wild with pain—
 Surely she will come again !
 Call her once and come away ;
 This way, this way !
 “ Mother dear, we cannot stay !
 The wild white horses foam and fret.”
 Margaret ! Margaret !

Come, dear children, come away down ;
Call no more !
One last look at the white-wall'd town,
And the little grey church on the windy shore ;
Then come down !
She will not come though you call all day ;
Come away, come away !

Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay ?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell ?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep ;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground ;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine ;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye ?
When did music come this way ?
Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away ?
Once she sate with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee.
She comb'd its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of a far-off bell.
She sigh'd, she look'd up through the clear green sea ;
She said : " I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little grey church on the shore to-day.

" 'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me !
And I lose my poor soul, Merman ! here with
thee."

I said, " Go up, dear heart, through the waves ;
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-
caves ! "

She smiled, she went up through the surf in the
bay.

Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children dear, were we long alone ?

" The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan ;
Long prayers," I said, " in the world they say ;
Come ! " I said ; and we rose through the surf in
the bay.

We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-wall'd
town ;

Through the narrow paved streets, where all was
still,

To the little grey church on the windy hill.

From the church came a murmur of folk at their
prayers,

But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.

We climb'd on the graves, on the stones worn with
rains,

And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded
panes.

She sate by the pillar ; we saw her clear :

" Margaret, hist ! come quick, we are here !

Dear heart," I said, " we are long alone ;

The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."

But, ah, she gave me never a look,

For her eyes were seal'd to the holy book !

Loud prays the priest ; shut stands the door.

Come away, children, call no more !

Come away, come down, call no more !

Down, down, down !
Down to the depths of the sea !
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings : " O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its
toy !
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well ;
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun ! "
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the spindle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,
And over the sand at the sea ;
And her eyes are set in a stare ;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh ;
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away children ;
Come children, come down !
The hoarse wind blows coldly ;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door :
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.

Singing : “ Here came a mortal,
 But faithless was she !
 And alone dwell for ever
 The kings of the sea.”

But, children, at midnight,
 When soft the winds blow,
 When clear falls the moonlight,
 When spring-tides are low ;
 When sweet airs come seaward
 From heaths starr'd with broom,
 And high rocks throw mildly
 On the blanch'd sands a gloom ;
 Up the still, glistening beaches,
 Up the creeks we will hie,
 Over banks of bright seaweed
 The ebb-tide leaves dry.
 We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
 At the white, sleeping town ;
 At the church on the hill-side—
 And then come back down.
 Singing : “ There dwells a loved one,
 But cruel is she !
 She left lonely for ever
 The kings of the sea.”

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834)

Part I

It is an ancient Mariner,
 And he stoppeth one of three.
 “ By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
 Now wherefore stopp'st thou me ?

The Bridegroom's doors are open wide,
And I am next of kin ;
The guests are met, the feast is set :
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand,
" There was a ship," quoth he.
" Hold off ! unhand me, grey-beard loon ! "
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child :
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone :
He cannot choose but hear ;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

" The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

" The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he !
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

" Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon——"
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The bride had paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she ;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear ;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

“ And now the Storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong :
He struck with his o’ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

“ And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold :
And ice, mast-high came floating by,
As green as emerald.

“ The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around :
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound !

“ At length did cross an Albatross,
Through the fog it came ;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God’s name.

“ It ate the food it ne’er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit ;
The helmsman steered us through !

“ And a good south wind sprung up behind ;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariner’s hollo !

“ In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine ;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moon-shine.”

“ God save thee, ancient Mariner !
From the fiends, that plague thee thus !
Why look’st thou so ? ”—With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross.

Part II

The Sun now rose upon the right :
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariner’s hollo !

And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work ’em woe :
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch ! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow.

Nor dim nor red, like God’s own head,
The glorious Sun uprist :
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.

'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free ;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be ;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea !

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion ;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink ;
Water, water, everywhere
Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot : O Christ !
That ever this should be !
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night ;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt, green, and blue and white.

And some in dreams assurèd were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so,
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root ;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

Ah ! well-a-day ! what evil looks
Had I from old and young !
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

Part III

There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time ! a weary time !
How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist ;
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist !
And still it neared and neared :
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked
We could nor laugh nor wail ;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood !
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail ! a sail !

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
 Agape they heard me call ;
 Gramercy ! they for joy did grin,
 And all at once their breath drew in,
 As they were drinking all.

See ! see ! (I cried) she tacks no more !
 Hither to work us weal ;
 Without a breeze, without a tide,
 She steadies with upright keel !

The western wave was all aflame,
 The day was wellnigh done !
 Almost upon the western wave
 Rested the broad bright Sun ;
 When that strange shape drove suddenly
 Betwixt us and the Sun.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
 (Heaven's Mother send us grace !)
 As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
 With broad and burning face.

Alas ! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
 How fast she nears and nears !
 Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,
 Like restless gossamers ?

Are those her ribs through which the Sun
 Did peer, as through a grate ?
 And is that Woman all her crew ?
 Is that a Death ? and are there two ?
 Is Death that Woman's mate ?

The naked hulk alongside came,
 And the twain were casting dice ;
 "The game is done ! I've won ! I've won !"
 Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

The Sun's rim dips ; the stars rush out :
At one stride comes the dark ;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

We listened and looked sideways up !
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip !
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white ;
From the sails the dew did drip—
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The hornèd Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

The souls did from their bodies fly,—
They fled to bliss or woe !
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow !

Part IV

“ I fear thee, ancient Mariner !
I fear thy skinny hand !
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

“I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
 And thy skinny hand, so brown.”—
 Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest !
 This body dropt not down.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
 Alone on a wide wide sea !
 And never a saint took pity on
 My soul in agony.

The moving Moon went up the sky,
 And nowhere did abide :
 Softly she was going up,
 And a star or two beside—

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
 I watched the water-snakes :
 They moved in tracks of shining white,
 And when they reared, the elfish light
 Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
 I watched their rich attire :
 Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
 They coiled and swam ; and every track
 Was a flash of golden fire.

O happy living things ! no tongue
 Their beauty might declare :
 A spring of love gushed from my heart,
 And I blessed them unaware :
 Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
 And I blessed them unaware.

The selfsame moment I could pray ;
 And from my neck so free
 The Albatross fell off, and sank
 Like lead into the sea.

Part V

Oh sleep ! it is a gentle thing
Beloved from pole to pole !
To Mary Queen the praise be given !
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew ;
And when I awoke, it rained.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank ;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

I moved and could not feel my limbs :
I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

And soon I heard a roaring wind :
It did not come anear ;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge ;
And the rain poured down from one black cloud ;
The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side :
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan.

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;
Yet never a breeze up blew;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
We were a ghastly crew.

The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee:
The body and I pulled at one rope
But he said nought to me.

“I fear thee, ancient Mariner!”
Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!
'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest;

For when it dawned—they dropped their arms,
And clustered round the mast;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the sky-lark sing;

Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning !

And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute ;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceased ; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sailèd on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe :
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid : and it was he
That made the ship to go.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too :
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
On me alone it blew.

Oh ! dream of joy ! is this indeed
The lighthouse top I see ?
Is this the hill ? is this the kirk ?
Is this mine own countree ?

We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray—
O let me be awake, my God !
Or let me sleep away.

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
 So smoothly it was strewn !
 And on the bay the moonlight lay,
 And the shadow of the Moon.

O Wedding-Guest ! this soul hath been
 Alone on a wide wide sea :
 So lonely 'twas, that God himself
 Scarce seemèd there to be.

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
 'Tis sweeter far to me,
 To walk together to the kirk
 With a goodly company !—

To walk together to the kirk,
 And all together pray,
 While each to his great Father bends,
 Old men, and babes, and loving friends
 And youths and maidens gay !

Farewell, farewell ! but this I tell
 To thee, thou Wedding-Guest !
 He prayeth well, who loveth well
 Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best
 All things both great and small ;
 For the dear God who loveth us,
 He made and loveth all.

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
 Whose beard with age is hoar,
 Is gone : and now the Wedding-Guest
 Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
 And is of sense forlorn :
 A sadder and a wiser man,
 He rose the morrow morn.

FOUR SONNETS

On First Looking into Chapman's "Homer"

John Keats (1795–1821)

MUCH have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen :
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold :
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken ;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He star'd at the Pacific—and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

Upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802

William Wordsworth (1770–1850)

EARTH has not anything to show more fair :
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty :
This City now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning : silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky,
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour valley, rock, or hill :

Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep !

The river glideth at his own sweet will ;

Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep ;

And all that mighty heart is lying still !

To Sleep

Sir Philip Sidney (1554–1586)

COME, Sleep, O Sleep ! the certain knot of peace ;

The baiting-place of wit ; the balm of woe ;

The poor man's wealth ; the prisoner's release ;

Th' indifferent judge between the high and low.

With shield of proof, shield me from out the press

Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw.

O make in me those civil wars to cease :

I will good tribute pay if thou do so.

Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,

A chamber deaf to noise and blind to light,

A rosy garland and a weary head ;

And if these things, as being there by right,

Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me

Livelier than elsewhere Stella's image see.

Shakespeare

Matthew Arnold (1822–1888)

OTHERS abide our question. Thou art free.

We ask and ask—Thou smilest and art still,

Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill,

Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,

Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,

Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling place,

Spares but the cloudy border of his base

To the foil'd searching of mortality ;

And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,

Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-honour'd, self-secure,

Didst tread on earth unguess'd at.—Better so !

All pains the immortal spirit must endure,

All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,

Find their sole speech in that victorious brow.

IN QUIET MOOD

The True Measure of Life

Ben Jonson (1573 ?-1637)

It is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make Man better be ;
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald and seer ;
 A lily of a day
 Is fairer far in May,
Although it fall and die that night—
It was the plant and flower of Light.
In small proportions we just beauties see ;
And in short measures life may perfect be.

His Pilgrimage *Sir Walter Raleigh (1552 ?-1618)*

GIVE me my scallop-shell of quiet,
 My staff of faith to walk upon,
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,
 My bottle of salvation,
My gown of glory, hope's true gage ;
And thus I'll take my pilgrimage.

Blood must be my body's balmer ;
 No other balm will there be given ;
While my soul, like quiet palmer,
 Travelleth towards the land of heaven ;
Over the silver mountains,
Where spring the nectar fountains,
 There will I kiss
 The bowl of bliss ;

And drink mine everlasting fill
Upon every milken hill.
My soul will be a-dry before,
But, after, it will thirst no more.

And did those Feet in Ancient Time

William Blake (1757–1827)

AND did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountain green ?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen ?

And did the countenance divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills ?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among these dark Satanic mills ?

Bring me my bow of burning gold !
Bring me my arrows of desire !
Bring me my spear : O clouds, unfold !
Bring me my chariot of fire !

I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

A Slumber did my Spirit Seal

William Wordsworth (1770–1850)

A SLUMBER did my spirit seal ;
I had no human fears :
She seem'd a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force ;
 She neither hears nor sees ;
 Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course
 With rocks, and stones, and trees.

Sweet Content *Thomas Dekker* (1570 ?–1641 ?)

ART thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers ?

O sweet content !

Art thou rich, yet is thy mind perplexed ?

O punishment !

Dost thou laugh to see how fools are vexed

To add to golden numbers golden numbers ?

O sweet content ! O sweet, O sweet content !

Work apace, apace, apace, apace ;

Honest labour bears a lovely face ;

Then hey nonny, hey nonny, nonny !

Canst drink the waters of the crisped spring ?

O sweet content !

Swimm'st thou in wealth, yet sink'st in thine own
 tears ?

O punishment !

Then he that patiently want's burden bears,

No burden bears, but is a king, a king !

O sweet content ! O sweet, O sweet content !

Work apace, apace, apace, apace ;

Honest labour bears a lovely face ;

Then hey nonny, hey nonny, nonny !

Sweet are the thoughts—

Robert Greene (1560–1592)

SWEET are the thoughts that savour of content ;

The quiet mind is richer than a crown ;

Sweet are the nights in careless slumber spent ;

The poor estate scorns fortune's angry frown :

Such sweet content, such minds, such sleep, such
 bliss,
 Beggars enjoy, when princes oft do miss.

The homely house that harbours quiet rest ;
 The cottage that affords no pride nor care ;
 The mean that 'grees with country music best ;
 The sweet consort of mirth and modest fare ;
 Obscurèd life sets down a type of bliss ;
 A mind content both crown and kingdom is.

**A Ternary of Littles, upon a Pipkin of Jelly
 sent to a Lady** *Robert Herrick (1591-1674)*

A LITTLE Saint best fits a little Shrine,
 A little Prop best fits a little Vine,
 As my small Cruise best fits a little Wine.

A little Seed best fits a little Soil,
 A little Trade best fits a little Toil ;
 As my small Jar best fits my little Oil.

A little Bin best fits a little Bread,
 A little Garland fits a little Head ;
 As my small Stuff best fits my little Shed.

A little Hearth best fits a little Fire,
 A little Chapel fits a little Choir,
 As my small Bell best fits my little Spire.

A little Stream best fits a little Boat ;
 A little Lead best fits a little Float ;
 As my small Pipe best fits my little Note.

A little Meat best fits a little Belly
 As sweetly, Lady, give me leave to tell ye,
 This little Pipkin fits this little Jelly.

A Carol

Unknown

*I sing of a maiden
That is matchless,
King of all Kings
To her son she chose.*

He came all so still
Where his mother was,
As dew in April
That falleth on the grass.

He came all so still
To his mother's bower,
As dew in April
That falleth on the flower.

He came all so still
Where his mother lay,
As dew in April
That falleth on the spray.

Mother and maiden
Was never none but she ;
Well may such a lady
God's mother be.

Requiescat

Matthew Arnold (1822-1888)

STREW on her roses, roses,
And never a spray of yew !
In quiet she reposes ;
Ah, would that I did too !

Her mirth the world required ;
She bathed it in smiles of glee.
But her heart was tired, tired,
And now they let her be.

Her life was turning, turning,
 In mazes of heat and sound.
 But for peace her soul was yearning,
 And now peace laps her round.

Her cabin'd, ample spirit,
 It flutter'd and fail'd for breath.
 To-night it doth inherit
 The vasty hall of death.

Helen of Kirkconnell

Old Ballad

I WISH I were where Helen lies,
 Night and day on me she cries ;
 O that I were where Helen lies,
 On fair Kirkconnell lea !

Curst be the heart that thought the thought,
 And curst the hand that fired the shot,
 When in my arms burd Helen dropt,
 And died to succour me !

O think na ye my heart was sair,
 When my Love dropp'd and spak nae mair !
 I laid her down wi' meikle care,
 On fair Kirkconnell lea.

As I went down the water side,
 None but my foe to be my guide,
 None but my foe to be my guide,
 On fair Kirkconnell lea.

I lighted down my sword to draw,
 I hackèd him in pieces sma',
 I hackèd him in pieces sma',
 For her sake that died for me.

O Helen fair, beyond compare !
I'll make a garland of thy hair,
Shall bind my heart for evermair,
Until the day I dee !

O that I were where Helen lies !
Night and day on me she cries ;
Out of my bed she bids me rise,
Says, "Haste, and come to me !"

O Helen fair ! O Helen chaste !
If I were with thee, I were blest,
Where thou lies low and takes thy rest,
On fair Kirkconnell's lea.

I wish my grave were growing green,
A winding sheet drawn owre my een,
And I in Helen's arms lying
On fair Kirkconnell lea.

I wish I were where Helen lies !
Night and day on me she cries ;
And I am weary of the skies,
For her sake that died for me.

**By the Statue of King Charles at Charing
Cross**

Lionel Johnson (1867-1902)

SOMBRE and rich, the skies ;
Great glooms, and starry plains,
Gently the night wind sighs ;
Else a vast silence reigns.

The splendid silence clings
Around me ; and around
The saddest of all kings
Crowned, and again discrowned.

Comely and calm, he rides
Hard by his own Whitehall :
Only the night wind glides :
No crowds, nor rebels, brawl.

Gone, too, his Court ; and yet,
The stars his courtiers are :
Stars in their stations set ;
And every wandering star.

Alone he rides, alone,
The fair and fatal king ;
Dark night is all his own,
That strange and solemn thing.

Which are more full of fate :
The stars, or those sad eyes ?
Which are more still and great :
Those brows ; or the dark skies ?

Although his whole heart yearn
In passionate tragedy :
Never was face so stern
With sweet austerity.

Vanquished in life, his death
By beauty made amends :
The passing of his breath
Won his defeated ends.

Brief life and hapless ? Nay :
Through death, life grew sublime.
Speak after sentence ? Yea :
And to the end of time.

Armoured he rides, his head
Bare to the stars of doom :
He triumphs now, the dead,
Beholding London's gloom.

Our wearier spirit faints,
Vexed in the world's employ :
His soul was of the saints ;
And art to him was joy.

King, tried in fires of woe !
Men hunger for thy grace :
And through the night I go,
Loving thy mournful face.

Yet when the city sleeps ;
When all the cries are still :
The stars and heavenly deeps
Work out a perfect will.

INTO DREAMLAND

To Daisies : Not to shut so soon

Robert Herrick (1591–1674)

SHUT not so soon ; the dull-eyed night
Hath not as yet begun
To make a seizure on the light,
Or to seal up the sun.

No marigolds yet closèd are ;
No shadows great appear ;
Nor doth the early Shepherd's Star
Shine like a spangle here.

Stay but till my Julia close
Her life-begetting eye ;
And let the whole world then dispose
Itself to live or die.

Sweet Day, so cool— *George Herbert (1593–1633)*

SWEET day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky :
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night,
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angry and brave
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
 A box where sweets compacted lie,
 Thy music shows ye have your closes,
 And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
 Like seasoned timber, never gives ;
 But though the whole world turn to coal,
 Then chiefly lives.

Dream-Pedlary

Thomas Lovell Beddoes (1803-1849)

If there were dreams to sell,
 What would you buy ?
 Some cost a passing bell ;
 Some a light sigh,
 That shakes from Life's fresh crown
 Only a rose-leaf down.
 If there were dreams to sell,
 Merry and sad to tell,
 And the crier rang the bell,
 What would you buy ?

A cottage lone and still,
 With bowers nigh,
 Shadowy, my woes to still,
 Until I die.
 Such pearl from Life's fresh crown
 Fain would I shake me down,
 Were dreams to have at will,
 This would best heal my ill,
 This would I buy.

The Song of the Evening Star to the Moon*Ben Jonson (1573 ?–1637)*

QUEEN and huntress, chaste and fair,
 Now the sun is laid to sleep,
 Seated in thy silver chair,
 State in wonted manner keep :
 Hesperus¹ entreats thy light
 Goddess, excellently bright.

Earth, let not thy envious shade
 Dare itself to interpose ;
 Cynthia's² shining orb was made
 Heaven to clear, when day did close :
 Bless us then with wishèd sight
 Goddess, excellently bright.

Lay thy bow of pearl apart,
 And thy crystal shining quiver ;
 Give unto the flying hart
 Space to breathe, how short soever :
 Thou that mak'st a day of night,
 Goddess, excellently bright.

Serenade*H. W. Longfellow (1807–1882)*

STARS of the summer night !
 Far in yon azure deeps,
 Hide, hide your golden light !
 She sleeps !
 My lady sleeps !
 Sleeps !

Moon of the summer night !
 Far down yon western steeps,
 Sink, sink in silver light !
 She sleeps !
 My lady sleeps !
 Sleeps !

¹ The Evening Star.² The Moon.

Wind of the summer night !
 Where yonder woodbine creeps,
 Fold, fold thy pinions light !
 She sleeps !
 My lady sleeps !
 Sleeps !

Dreams of the summer night !
 Tell her her lover keeps
 Watch ! while in slumbers light
 She sleeps !
 My lady sleeps !
 Sleeps !

To Julia at Night-time *R. Herrick* (1591-1674)

HER eyes the glow-worm lend thee,
 The shooting stars attend thee ;
 And the elves also,
 Whose little eyes glow
 Like the sparks of fire, befriend thee.

No Will-o'-the-Wisp mislight thee,
 Nor snake or slow-worm bite thee ;
 But on, on thy way,
 Not making a stay,
 Since ghost there's none to affright thee.

Let not the dark thee cumber ;
 What though the moon does slumber ?
 The stars of the night
 Will lend thee their light,
 Like tapers clear, without number.

Then, Julia, let me woo thee,
 Thus, thus, to come unto me ;
 And when I shall meet
 Thy silvery feet,
 My soul I'll pour into thee.

Evening Song*John Fletcher* (1579–1625).

SHEPHERDS all, and maidens fair,
Fold your flocks up, for the air
'Gins to thicken, and the sun
Already his great course hath run.
See the dew-drops how they kiss
Every little flower that is,
Hanging on their velvet heads,
Like a rope of crystal beads :
See the heavy clouds low falling,
And bright Hesperus down calling
The dead Night from under ground ;
At whose rising, mists unsound,
Damps and vapours fly apace,
Hovering o'er the wanton face
Of these pastures, where they come,
Striking dead both bud and bloom ;
Therefore, from such danger lock
Every one his lovèd flock ;
And let your dogs lie loose without,
Lest the wolf come as a scout
From the mountain, and ere day,
Bear a lamb or kid away ;
Or the crafty thievish fox
Break upon your simple flocks.
To secure yourself from these,
Be not too secure in ease ;
Let one eye his watches keep,
Whilst the other eye doth sleep ;
So shall you good shepherds prove,
And for ever hold the love
Of our great god. Sweetest slumbers,
And soft silence fall in numbers
On your eyelids ! So, farewell !
Thus I end my evening's knell.

Quiet Sleep

Charles I (1600–1649)

CLOSE thine eyes, and sleep secure ;
 Thy soul is safe, thy body sure,
 He that guards thee, he that keeps,
 Never slumbers, never sleeps.
 A quiet conscience in the breast
 Has only peace, has only rest.
 The wisest and the mirth of things
 Are out of tune unless she sings :
 Then close thine eyes in peace and sleep secure,
 No sleep so sweet as thine, no rest so sure.

Midnight

Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst (1536–1608)

MIDNIGHT was come, when every vital thing
 With sweet sound sleep their weary limbs did rest,
 The beasts were still, the little birds that sing
 Now sweetly slept, beside their mother's breast,
 The old and all were shrouded in their nest :

The waters calm, the cruel seas did cease,
 The woods, and fields, and all things held their
 peace.

The golden stars were whirled amid their race,
 And on the earth did laugh with twinkling light,
 When each thing, nestled in his resting-place,
 Forgot day's pain with pleasure of the night :
 The hare had not the greedy hounds in sight,
 The fearful deer of death stood not in doubt,
 The partridge dreamed not of the falcon's foot,

The ugly bear now minded not the stake,
 Nor how the cruel mastives do him tear ;
 The stag lay still unrousèd from the brake ;
 The foamy boar feared not the hunter's spear :

All things were still, in desert, bush and brere :¹
 With quiet heart, now from their travails ceased,
 Soundly they slept in midst of all their rest.

Epilogue to Asolando *R. Browning* (1812–1889)

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep time,
 When you set your fancies free,
 Will they pass to where—by death, fools think,
 imprisoned—
 Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you
 loved so,
 —Pity me ?

Oh to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken !
 What had I on earth to do
 With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly ?
 Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I drivel
 —Being—who ?

One who never turned his back but marched breast
 forward,
 Never doubted clouds would break,
 Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong
 would triumph,
 Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
 Sleep to wake.

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's worktime,
 Greet the unseen with a cheer !
 Bid him forward, breast and back as either should
 be,
 " Strive and thrive ! " cry " Speed,—fight on, fare
 ever
 There as here ! "

¹ Briar.

